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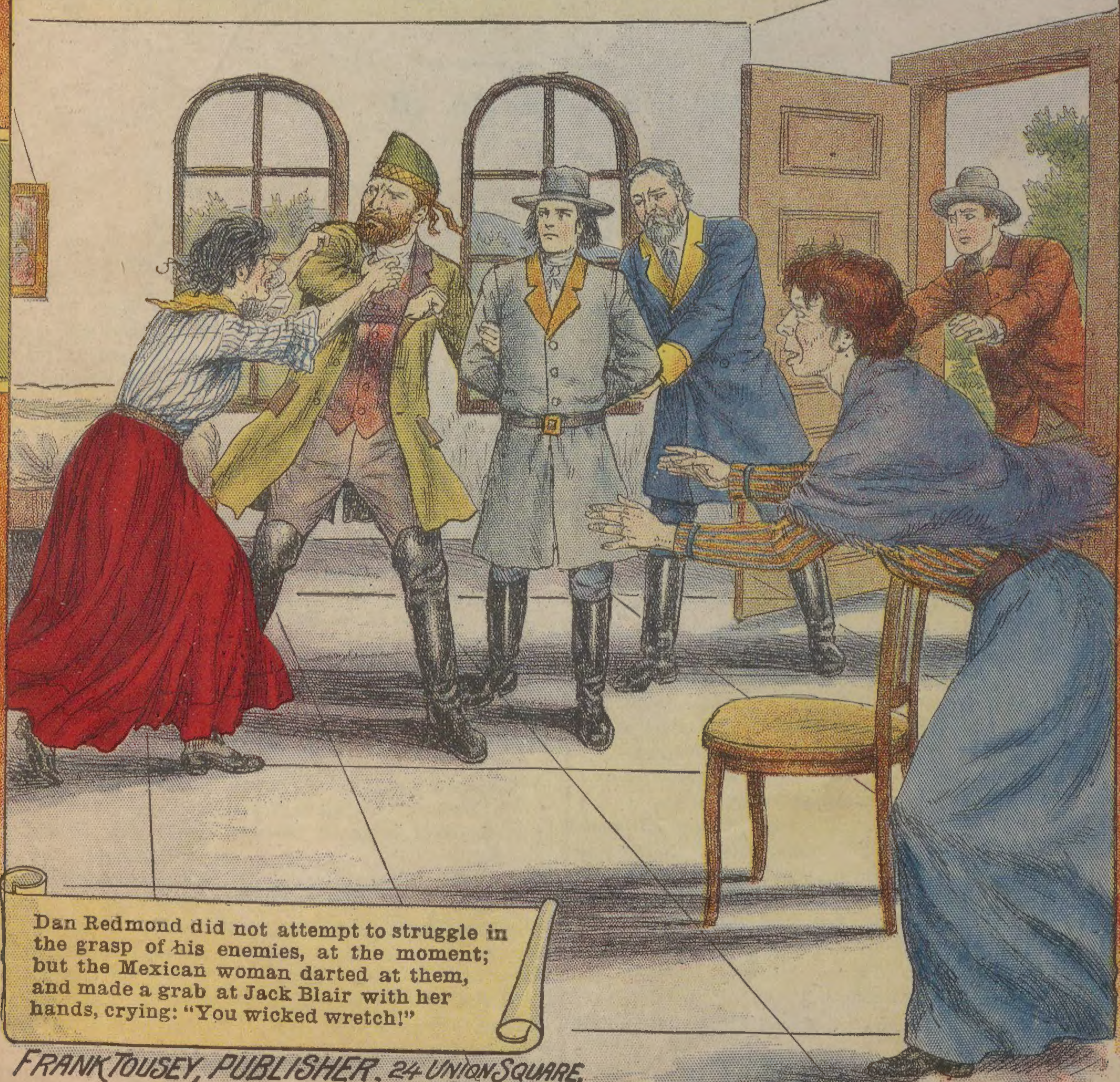
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PLUCK AND LUCK

AN IRISH AMERICAN,
OR, DAN REDMOND'S ADVENTURES IN SEARCH OF HIS FATHER.

By ALLAN ARNOLD.



Dan Redmond did not attempt to struggle in the grasp of his enemies, at the moment; but the Mexican woman darted at them, and made a grab at Jack Blair with her hands, crying: "You wicked wretch!"

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PLUCK AND LUCK

Stories of Adventure.

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AN IRISH-AMERICAN

OR,

DAN REDMOND'S ADVENTURES IN SEARCH OF HIS FATHER

By ALLAN ARNOLD

CHAPTER I.

THE DASHING YOUNG SOLDIER.

Some few months before the breaking out of the Mexican War a young Irishman entered the harbor of New York on board of an emigrant vessel.

This young Irishman called himself Dan Redmond. He was dressed in very rough clothes and he did not have five dollars in his pocket; but even a casual observer could notice that he was a tall, handsome, manly youth, and that he bore himself, when off his guard, like one who had been accustomed to the better ways of life.

On the first evening of his landing in New York Dan Redmond strolled up Broadway with a small bundle in his hand, his whole manner telling of one who had no definite place to rest for the night or a friendly face to seek in his solitude.

The young Irishman was a stranger in the great city, as he had not a single friend therein.

During the passage over in the emigrant vessel he did not make a single acquaintance with his fellow-passengers, as he acted to them like one who either desired to shun all observation or who regarded himself as better than his companions for the time.

The truth was that the young fellow calling himself Dan Redmond was under a dark cloud at the time, as he had fled from Ireland, and from a splendid home and kind friends there, under an assumed name.

That name he could never assume again until he had cleared himself from implication in a certain crime, and he was under a solemn oath to remain a wanderer, if not called back again by those who were aiming to serve him in that direction.

On reaching the spot where the post-office now stands the young Irishman turned to the right and moved on quietly until he reached Centre street, when he soon found himself standing in front of the gloomy-looking prison, the sight of which has chilled many a heart ere now.

While he was thus standing in front of the famous place an officer came along dragging a young man with him as a prisoner and followed by a yelling crowd.

The young Irishman learned the character of the place very soon, and a shudder passed over his frame as he hastened up the street from the dismal neighborhood, while he muttered to himself:

"It seems ominous to me that I should wander here, for gracious knows how soon I may be in there myself charged with a serious crime, and I as innocent as the child not born yet."

Turning to the left the young man struck over toward Broadway while he kept muttering to himself:

"This crowded city is no place for me at all, and I must strike out in the country as soon as I can. In some quiet place there I may find refuge working on a farm until I return again, although that may be never at all, and it is little I know about work of any kind."

A deep sigh escaped from the lad, who was scarcely twenty at the time; and his bright blue eyes flashed fiercely a moment later, while he clenched his hand as he continued to mutter:

"Dick Massey is all to blame for this, and he will suffer for it some day, but it was I that was the fool to be caught in the trap set for me."

The young Irishman spent the night in an humble hotel, and on the following morning he started out across the Harlem river to seek employment in Westchester County.

He was footsore and weary at six o'clock that evening when he stopped at the house of a rough Irish farmer and inquired if they required any help on the farm.

The rough farmer cast a scornful glance at the white hands of the youth as he replied in surly tones:

"I don't want any help at present, and if I did, it isn't the likes of you I would employ."

"Why is that, sir?"

"Because I don't believe you ever did a day's work in your

life, to judge by them soft white hands of yours, and I have my suspicions of such chaps as you going about the country."

Dan Redmond was a spirited young fellow, and he flushed up on the instant as he answered in angry tones:

"Do you suspect that I am a thief then?"

The farmer did not reply at the moment, but slipped into the house as he said to himself:

"That young chap has a bad eye in his head, and he may have a pistol handy, so I'll be ready for him."

Tramps were not common in those days, but the farmers of Westchester county were sometimes troubled by the wild young fellows from the city, and Farmer Doyle was on his guard against them.

This conversation took place in the farm-yard outside the house, and Dan Redmond turned away toward the road as the farmer disappeared, the young fellow muttering to himself:

"I was going to ask the surly dog for some supper and a bed for the night, but I would die on the roadside before I would do it now. I'll have to harden and discolor my hands if I want to get a chance to work on a farm in this country."

He had just reached the gate leading out on the road when the rough farmer called out to him, saying:

"That's right, my fine young gentleman, as I can tell you that we are prepared for such chaps as ye out here!"

Dan Redmond turned at the moment, and he saw the man holding a shot-gun in his hand.

At that moment a little boy of eight years ran out of the house, crying:

"The hawk, the hawk, father! Have a shot at him and bring him down!"

The farmer stared up toward the sky, the shot-gun went off on the instant, and Dan Redmond fell to the ground with a cry of pain.

Then out from the house dashed a handsome young girl of seventeen, crying:

"Father, you have shot the stranger!"

The farmer dropped the gun and wrung his hands in agony as he groaned forth:

"Heaven forgive me, as, sure, I didn't mean to do that at all, for the gun went off before I pulled the trigger at all."

Dan Redmond staggered to his feet and rubbed his lower limbs as he responded with a smile, saying:

"I'll vouch it was an accident, sir, and don't you bother your head about me, as only a few of the small shot struck me in the leg."

In less than five minutes after, the young wanderer was seated in the best room in the farm-house and the old farmer was dressing the slight wounds in his leg.

Dan Redmond did not leave Pat Doyle's house that night, or for several nights after, as he was engaged by the old farmer, while he was bewitched, to a certain extent, by the young daughter of the house.

Ellen Doyle was a winsome, intelligent young girl of seventeen, who had received an excellent education at a convent in the city of New York.

As her mother was dead for five years, she acted as house-keeper for her father on the farm, and she also took care of her little brother, a sturdy lad of eight.

Farmer Doyle soon became very much attached to the young stranger, but the old fellow would often shake his head and remark:

"He was never used to hard work, I'll go bail, and I don't know what to make of him at all. He won't tell me much about himself, but it is easy to see that he was brought up as a gentleman, although he don't put on any airs with us."

Dan Redmond was, indeed, as humble as humble could be, and he tried to make himself as useful as possible on the farm, for Ellen's sake.

He could ride and drive a horse with any one in the neighborhood, and he could handle a shot-gun like an old sportsman, but he could not guide the plow or fell the trees in the neighboring wood with any skill at all.

Before he had been six months on the farm, keen old Farmer Doyle saw that his fair daughter was deeply in love with the young stranger, and that the young man was infatuated with her also.

Though cross and surly at times, old Doyle was not a hard-hearted man, and he had sense enough to know that his opposition might make matters worse.

When he had learned that his daughter was engaged to the young stranger he called him aside one evening and made certain inquiries.

The young man then told him, with a sigh, that he could not say anything about the past, that he had some hopes of being well off in the near future, and that he was willing to work his flesh to the bones for Ellen's sake.

Dan Redmond and Ellen Doyle were married on the following week, and all went well with the young couple for about six months after.

The war with Mexico had then broken out, volunteers and regulars were hastened away to the Rio Grande to fight under General Scott, and wild was the excitement in New York City and throughout the country.

As Dan Redmond was a brave, gallant young fellow, the war fever struck him with full force, and he felt that he must away to win fame and fortune on the plains of Mexico.

His young wife saw what was running in his mind, and she had learned enough of his character to know that he could be as stubborn as a mule when he made up his mind on any subject.

She was also a patriotic young creature, and she felt that it was but his duty to fight for the land of his adoption, and so she said to him:

"I see that you are restless here, my dear Dan, and I can't blame you, with all the excitement that is going on in the city about the war."

"The truth is, my darling, I come of a warlike race, and I always had a notion to be a soldier. They tell me, besides, that fame and gold are to be won on the plains of Mexico, and why shouldn't I take a hand with the brave lads who are going away now. I am only an encumbrance here on the farm, and while I love you as dearly as ever, my heart is throbbing to join in the fray, if you will only give me your consent."

Ellen did give her consent within that very hour, and Dan hastened to join a troop of mounted men then volunteering to serve across the Rio Grande.

Ellen was very proud of her gallant young soldier when she saw him in his uniform, as there was not a better looking young man in the whole troop, while she felt in her heart that he would never turn his face from a foe.

The young soldier sailed from New York to New Orleans and from thence to the Rio Grande.

The city of Vera Cruz was besieged by the Americans soon after that, and Dan Redmond wrote back to his wife to say that he had been promoted for his gallantry in an action with some of the Mexican troopers outside the place.

Then followed the famous campaign under General Scott, the hard fought battles on the road, and the close of the war by the capture of the City of Mexico.

Ellen Redmond had never received a letter from her husband after the American army left Vera Cruz, although she wrote to tell him that a bright boy had been born to them.

She watched the papers for the lists of the dead, wounded and missing, in the various battles, and her heart throbbed with delight when his name did not appear among them.

Then she waited and waited until the troops came proudly marching back from the field of victory, hoping and praying to see the form of her gallant young soldier among the veterans.

But Dan Redmond was not in the ranks when the survivors of the brave troops returned.

Then old Doyle made inquiries, when he learned from the late comrades of his son-in-law that Lieutenant Redmond had been reported missing at Vera Cruz after the return of the army to that city from the conquering march to the City of Mexico.

None of the officers of the troop could then tell anything more about the missing young man.

He left his quarters in the Mexican city one evening, and he was never seen after by any of his comrades.

"I am certain that he is dead," groaned Ellen, as she turned to embrace her little boy, "and I will never see my gallant young soldier again."

CHAPTER II.

ELLEN REDMOND'S SECRET.

Ellen Redmond waited three months in sorrow, hoping to hear something from her young husband, but not a word came from the missing soldier.

Her father had heard something from one of the returned veterans, but as he was a sensible old fellow he did not mention the matter to his pining daughter.

When alone old Doyle would mutter to himself, saying:

"He was a clever lad, and I know he must have been a gentleman in the old country, but I wish to goodness he had kept away from my place. I hate to think that he is a scamp, but I am sadly afraid he is."

Then the old fellow would speak to his daughter as if fully assured that the young soldier had met his death in some secret manner in the city of Vera Cruz.

"Don't worry about him more than you can help, my good girl," he would say to Ellen, "and think only that you have got a son to look after. Let us bring him up like an honest boy, and he will be a credit to you yet."

About a year after the return of the troops from Mexico old Doyle fell from his wagon and injured his spine.

After that the old man was a helpless invalid, and the whole care of the farm fell on Ellen Redmond and her little brother, who was a strong, sturdy boy between eleven and twelve years of age at the time.

Two weeks after the accident one of the neighbors brought Ellen Redmond a letter from the village post-office which startled her very much.

Without saying a word the young wife retreated to her bedroom and opened the letter with trembling hands.

A bank note fell from the letter at the same time, which the young woman did not notice in her intense agitation.

With glaring eyes and her heart beating with the wildest excitement, the young woman read the letter to the end.

Then a cry of agony burst from her, and clasping her little boy to her breast she sank in a swoon to the floor.

It was an hour after when she recovered to find the little boy playing around her and the letter clutched in her right hand.

After embracing the child again the young woman sat down to ponder and to read the letter once more.

Then a fearful sigh escaped from her, a dark frown overspread her fair face, and she clenched her hands, as she muttered aloud:

"I will keep my secret forever, but I will keep the money also for the sake of my poor boy."

Ellen Redmond then picked up the bank-note and put it away carefully in her trunk, while she continued to mutter:

"I may tell my boy the truth when he is old enough to understand it, and I'll leave it to himself as to what he should do. My heart is broken, and I don't think I'll live very long now."

Holding her little boy by the hand, the young woman then staggered out to the kitchen stove and thrust the letter into it as she continued to mutter:

"I hope I will never get such another again; but I will keep all the money sent to me for little Dan's sake."

Old Doyle was too sick to notice the change in his daughter that evening, but her little brother did notice her pale cheeks and her tearful eye, and he said to her:

"Let me sit up with father to-night, Ellen, as you are worn out from tending to him."

The young woman smiled at her kind-hearted brother as she said in her gentle tones:

"We can both rest to-night, Tom, as the two good sisters will be here to watch over father."

Two Sisters of Mercy did arrive at the farm-house that evening to watch over the sick old man, whose death was expected hourly.

Little Dan Redmond, who was nearly two years old at the time, was heard crying very bitterly in his mother's bedroom on the following morning, and young Tom Doyle ran in to see what was the trouble.

The sisters were still keeping watch over the dying man in his bedroom when the sturdy boy ran in to them groaning forth:

"Goodness alive, I am afraid poor Ellen is awful sick, and she looks like death."

The two sisters hastened into the woman's bedroom, when they found her in a faint, and with the tears streaming down her pale cheeks.

The well-trained sisters hastened to apply restoratives, and the young woman recovered her senses only to gasp forth in heart-broken tones:

"I would die in peace."

A doctor was sent for at once, and the good sisters hastened to give the invalid nourishing drinks, but one fainting fit followed another until the following day, when the doctor declared that it would be a hopeless case unless something occurred to rouse her into exertion.

On the following morning old Doyle passed quietly away to his last home, and the sisters thought it best to keep the matter a secret from his heart-broken and helpless daughter.

The good women endeavored to rouse the dying wife and mother, and one of them whispered to the other.

"I fear that she has some great secret on her mind, and that is preying on her."

"If we could only arouse her in some way," answered the other, "she may recover."

At that moment the sick woman raised her head from the pillow and gasped forth:

"I want to see my boy before I die."

The child had been kept away from the sick room, although the little fellow was calling for his mamma at all times.

Tom Doyle was in the room at the time and he hastened out for the little boy.

When the sturdy lad returned again one of the sisters was bending over the sick woman and the other was standing behind her holding a crucifix in her hands.

"Oh! mamma, mamma!" cried the little fellow, as he held out his hands.

"The poor soul is dead, I fear," gasped the sister who was seated at the bedside bending over the insensible woman. "Give me the child and let him kiss her before her lips are cold."

The sister took the child from the sturdy boy and seated herself at the bedside to place him close to his mother as she said:

"Kiss your mother, little boy, and she will kiss you back."

The little fellow reached out his hands to his mother as he lisped forth:

"Oh, mamma, you kiss me first."

The poor invalid did not make any reply to the appeal, as she lay like one dead, while her brother drew back with clasped hands and tearful eyes as he groaned forth:

"Poor Ellen is dead also, and there is no one left to take care of little Dan now but me."

As if aroused by the appeal of her innocent boy poor Ellen Redmond opened her eyes at the moment, gave a gasp or two, and then clasped the child to her breast as she burst into tears, and sobbed forth:

"My poor darling, I must and I will live for your sake."

Ellen Redmond did live with her secret locked in her breast, and she continued to care for the humble farm and her bright little boy for several years after.

Her brother Tom lived with them, and he grew to be an honest, sturdy fellow, whose only aim in life appeared to be to work for the little half orphan and his widowed sister.

When little Dan Redmond was about twelve years of age and attending the village school, he addressed his mother rather suddenly one day, saying:

"Am I not an American, mother?"

The good woman smiled, and then replied:

"You are an Irish-American, Dan."

"Then my father was an Irishman, mother?"

"He was, my son, and so was my father."

"I was born here in the house, wasn't I?"

"Certainly, my boy."

"Didn't my father fight in the American army in the war with Mexico?"

"He did, Dan."

"And wasn't he killed there?"

The young mother sighed and turned away her head as she muttered to herself:

"He is too young to know the truth yet, but he will find it out some day if I do not tell him."

The young mother then put her son off by telling him the story of his father's death as it was first reported to her, and she continued by saying:

"Your father was a brave man and I hope you will be like him in that respect."

"When I am a man," replied the boy, "I will go out and fight the Mexicans also, as I know they must have killed my father in Vera Cruz, when the war was over, because he fought against them so well."

After that day little Dan Redmond spoke very often about his father; and he read the history of the war in Mexico with far more interest than any of his school-fellows.

Ellen Redmond and her brother struggled on with the little farm for several years, and they managed to give little Dan a good education and a happy home by pinching themselves at all times.

The march of improvement reached their neighborhood at last; a thriving village sprang up on a site near the edge of the farm, and the poor young widow was offered a splendid price for the land.

She accepted the offer for her son's sake, and they all retired to live in a comfortable cottage on the suburbs of

Brooklyn city, with money enough in bank to live on very comfortably, if not to spare.

Young Dan Redmond was then sent to an excellent school in the city of Brooklyn, and when he was eighteen years of age he had acquired a sound practical education and a fair share of good common sense as well.

Tom Doyle continued to live with his sister and nephew, the good fellow often declaring that he would never take a wife while he had Ellen and Dan to look after.

Dan Redmond was a tall, handsome, manly fellow at eighteen, at which time his mother desired to put him at some useful business, although she had money enough in bank to let him act the part of a gentleman.

The good, watchful creature noticed, however, that her son had a taste for roaming, that he still continued to talk of wars and the freedom of nations, while he would often say to his parent:

"I wish America would get into a war with England, and then I could strike a blow for my dear father's country. I am an Irish-American, you know, and while I love my own land the best of all on earth, I would be proud and happy to have a chance at our old English enemies."

After declaring himself in such a manner one day, Dan's mother called him into her bedroom and told him the secret of her life.

The young man listened with flashing eyes and flushed face until the story was ended and then she said to him:

"Think over the matter well, Dan, and then make up your mind what you will do."

Young Dan Redmond pondered over the subject for two minutes only, and he then grasped his mother's hand and kissed her in the most affectionate manner as he said to her, in gentle but resolute tones:

"I will go to Ireland, mother."

CHAPTER III.

THE IRISH AMERICAN IN IRELAND.

At the close of the civil war hundreds of soldiers and officers who had fought bravely in both armies paid visits to England and Ireland.

Some went over for health and recreation, others to visit friends in the old land, and several hastened there in the hope of seeing a little more fighting.

An honest Irish American was always welcomed by the humble people of Ireland, while the snobs and aristocrats looked on him with suspicion and dislike.

Young Dan Redmond landed at Queenstown just at the close of the civil war, and he was a little ahead of the soldier visitors who flocked there after him.

The young Irishman had thought of his mother's secret from the time he left his home in Brooklyn, and he would often mutter to himself, saying:

"From what mother has told me I cannot believe that my father is a very wicked man, and I am almost certain that something serious happened to him just after he wrote that letter. His name was not Redmond, and goodness knows what it was, but I will find him if he is alive. I have only a slight clew to find him, but Ireland is not a very large place, and I will search for him throughout the whole country until I get on his track."

On reaching the city of Cork the young Irish American put aside the clothes he had worn on the voyage, having purchased a strong plain suit to wear in his travels through the Emerald Isle.

He first started out toward Dublin, and he spent two months in that city, making certain inquiries in a quiet way, but without meeting with any success.

The young Irish American then proceeded toward the north, traveling on foot from place to place, and often stopping for days and weeks at towns and villages.

Being equally unsuccessful in the north, Dan Redmond turned his steps toward the west of Ireland, as he said to himself:

"If I keep on at this rate for a year or so, as I am bound to do, I will know every spot in Ireland. I am on what they call a wild goose chase here, but I am bound to keep it up until I discover what I am after."

Dan Redmond wore out the third pair of strong shoes before he left the west of Ireland to turn his face toward the south again, but his patience and his perseverance were as wholesome as ever.

He was nearly a year in Ireland, and the bright summer sun was shining over the land again, when the persevering youth struck on a village on the southern coast one evening.

Having mixed with the people a good deal during his travels, Dan had picked up a fair share of the Irish accent, and his hands and face had become a little roughened also.

As he had lived on his mother's farm until he was sixteen, and as he was not an idle lad, he would often work for a week or two with some of the Irish farmers, spending his evenings in making quiet inquiries about the rich gentlemen in the neighborhood.

On the evening in question, Dan put up at the village tavern, where he soon became an object of curiosity.

The young fellow answered the landlord's questions with easy confidence, taking good care, however, not to give the name he had born in his native land.

The young Irish American had called himself Dan Donnelly ever since landing in Ireland, as he had his own secret reasons for not keeping up the name his father had borne in America, and which he felt assured was not his real one.

While the young fellow was eating his supper in a corner of the bar-room, a stout man of medium height, wearing a full dark beard, a Scotch cap and riding boots, entered the place and called for a drink.

Dan could not tell why a cold sensation swept over him at the sight of the man, and he attributed it to the chilly breeze blowing up from the sea at the time, yet he felt another shudder passing over his frame when the stranger bent his dark, piercing eyes on him before he turned to the landlord and inquired:

"Who is that lad?"

The landlord answered in subdued tones, and Dan could not overhear the words.

The two men then kept on conversing in low tones for some time, when the stranger moved over toward Dan, holding a heavy riding whip in his hand as he said to him in blunt, harsh tones:

"I understand that you are looking for work hereabouts."

The cold chill swept over the young Irish American again, but he roused himself and answered in civil tones:

"I am, sir."

"What can you do?" inquired the stranger.

"I can take care of horses, plow a little, and do general work around the farm and stable."

"Where do you come from and what is your name?"

"I was brought up around Kildare and my name is Dan Donnelly."

"Were you ever in America?"

"Never, sir, but I hope to be able to go there some day."

The man who was speaking to the young Irish American was known as Jack Blair in the neighborhood, and he was the

manager and head gamekeeper for a certain Lord Richard Massey, who had a magnificent estate and a fine old castle about four miles from the village.

Jack Blair offered Dan employment at the castle stables, and the young wanderer readily accepted the offer.

When the man retired from the tavern, Dan saw him riding away on a splendid black horse, and he turned to the landlord, and inquired:

"What kind of a master will he be, sir?"

The landlord winked in a cunning manner, and shook his head as he replied:

"That will depend altogether on what kind of a lad you will turn out to be. If you are one of the boys, don't go near him, but if you are one of his own kind, maybe you would get along with him, for he takes to those who despise their own poor land."

As the young Irish American had been initiated into one of the secret patriotic societies then very popular among the young people of Ireland, he understood the landlord's explanation.

Even after the man left the place Dan felt the cold shudder passing over him when he thought of it, yet he made up his mind to go to Massey Castle on the following morning and get to work there.

The young Irish American dreamt of the man with the black beard and piercing eyes all that night, and even in his sleep he could feel the cold shudder passing over him.

After breakfast on the following morning Dan started out for Massey Castle, as he said to himself:

"Something tells me that I have struck on warm ground at last, and I feel that Jack Blair was connected with my father in some way."

It was about ten o'clock in the morning when the young fellow walked through a small village leading up to the castle gates, and he had all the appearance of a respectable young laborer in search of employment.

Just outside the village a rough-looking young fellow, about a year younger than himself, sprang over the park walls and stood before him, crying:

"Where in the fury did you come from now?"

Dan eyed the lad carefully for a few moments, and he soon realized that he had to deal with a queer genius, so he replied:

"I come from Paradise, my boy."

The rough-looking stranger grinned and winked slyly as he inquired:

"And how are all the boys in Paradise?"

"They are happy enough, only they are wishing for one thing."

"And what is that, my boy?"

"Some such lad as you to lead them clear up to heaven."

The rough-looking lad sprang forward on the instant, clasped Dan's hand, and gave him a peculiar grip as he cried:

"You are one of the right sort and no mistake. But where are you bound for now?"

"To Massey Castle, where I am engaged to work in the stables."

"The mischief you say! Thunder and turf! what takes one like you to work under Jack Blair, the worst friend of the cause in the whole neighborhood?"

"I am going there because I want work," answered Dan.

"And what is your name?"

"My name, is it? I would give it to you, but you mustn't tell Jack Blair you know me. Me name is Rory Murphy, but I am known as Roaring Rory about here."

As the young fellow uttered the words he gave vent to a roar that would have startled a band of wild Indians on the plains.

Dan fancied that the young fellow was crazy, and he was

moving along the road away from him when Rory sprang after him and whispered into his ear, saying:

"If you are bound for the Castle stables, remember one thing I tell to you now."

"What is that, Rory?"

"Keep your eye shut be day at the castle, and be an owl at night."

Having given the strange advice, the rough lad made a dart for the high wall and cleared it with a bound, while he sent forth another wild roar that was echoed in the hills beyond.

The young Irish American smiled as he turned toward the castle gate while he muttered to himself, saying:

"That's a strange customer, and he has given me strange advice. I am to keep my eyes shut during the day, but I must play the owl at night. What can he mean, if he means anything at all?"

At that moment the gates leading up to the castle were flung open, and out rode Jack Blair on the black horse.

Galloping down the road toward the young Irish American the black-visaged man pulled up his horse as he cried:

"Did you see a young scamp along here, sirrah?"

"He has just jumped over the wall there," answered Dan, knowing full well that Jack Blair would not force the horse over the high wall.

At that moment another wild roar was heard inside the park and then a shrill voice fell on their ears crying:

"Come after me if you dare, Jack Blair, and I'll break your ugly snoot for ye."

Jack Blair stared at the high wall for a moment and then shook his riding whip in the direction from whence the voice came as he cried:

"I'll lash you to pieces before long, you young rascal."

"Come in and try it if you are able and take that in the bargain," cried Roaring Rory, as another wild yell burst from him.

Then out from over the park wall came a clump of soft earth, which struck the rider full in the face.

The man on horseback uttered a fearful imprecation and sprang to the ground as he cried to Dan:

"Hold my horse, you rascal, and I will go after that imp."

Dan held the horse, and the gamekeeper, who was an active man, made a bound for the high wall, which he managed to scramble over with some difficulty.

He had scarcely leaped down on the other side, however, when Roaring Rory bounded out on the road again, and sprang on the horse, crying:

"Hands off the bridle, my boy, and here goes for a brave ride on a good horse."

As the wild fellow spoke he bent down and gave Dan a blow on the hand that caused him to release his grasp on the bridle rein.

Then away down toward the village dashed the black horse and its wild rider, the latter crying:

"Play the owl at night, my boy, and to the mischief with Jack Blair and all his kind."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BLACK-EYED MAIDEN.

Dan Redmond watched the wild boy and the black horse until they were out of sight in a turn of the road, and it then suddenly occurred to him that he had not acted a very manly part while taking care of the animal intrusted to him by his new employer.

The young Irish American was quick to act in an emergency,

and casting one eye up at the stone wall he dropped on the road, while he cried aloud in angry tones:

"You villain of the world, I'll pay you for that blow when I meet you again."

Dan was still sitting on the ground rubbing dust on his face, when Jack Blair climbed over the high wall again, crying out in furious tones:

"You blundering idiot, why did you let him take the horse from you?"

Dan stared down the road in a stupid manner, and then turned to the angry man, as he replied in simple tones:

"How could I help it, sir, when he gave me a blow and knocked me down here, when I didn't expect it at all from the young rogue?"

Jack Blair turned impatiently toward the castle gate, as he cried:

"Get up out of there and follow me, you cowardly loon. If you don't give that young rascal a good drubbing for that very soon you'll not suit me long."

Dan Redmond regained his feet and walked on after the keeper, as he replied:

"If you give me the loan of a good horse, sir, to follow him I'll wager I'll soon give him the finest drubbing a boy ever got in his life. Won't you have him put in jail for stealing the horse?"

The man grinned in a savage manner as he grunted forth:

"We must catch the rogue first, and I can tell you that is no easy matter. Follow me now, and don't say any more about it."

Dan Redmond could see that Jack Blair was a surly customer and that he was not inclined to talk much, while the young fellow said to himself:

"This is a man of some character, and I don't think it's a good one either. I feel the cold chill come over me every time I meet his eye."

The young fellow was soon installed as an assistant in the extensive stables attached to the castle, and it did not take him long to notice that his companions for the time were a rough, ugly set of rascals who regarded him with jealous eyes.

He made two or three attempts to get into conversation with his new companions, but they answered him in short, surly tones, accompanied by scowls that were meant to infer:

"You are not one of us, and we don't mean to let you get anything out of us."

Dan Redmond was disappointed, as he was very anxious to make some inquiries about the people of the castle, and about the wild young fellow calling himself Roaring Rory.

About two hours after he was installed in the stable, one of the fellows employed there led the black horse in at the gate, and the splendid animal was in a perfect lather of perspiration.

Jack Blair appeared soon after to examine the horse, and fierce was his anger at Rory as he muttered aloud:

"I'll have that loon's life yet."

Dan Redmond could then perceive that all his fellows around the stables appeared to be very much afraid of the keeper, and that he treated them as if they were so many slaves under him.

After examining the horse and giving vent to his rage, Jack Blair turned to Dan with a grim smile on his dark features and inquired:

"Didn't you say you would like to get even with the young loon who knocked you down?"

"To be sure I did, sir, and I only wish I had a chance at him."

"You will have a chance before long. You take particular

care of this horse for me, as I want him to be in as good condition to-morrow again."

Jack Blair then turned away without addressing another word to any one, and Dan could notice that the fellows around him appeared to be very much relieved when he disappeared.

The young Irish American then proceeded to take full charge of the black horse, and as he admired the animal while he desired to please his new employer, he was very particular in his care.

The young fellow was an excellent judge of horses, and while he could notice several other fine animals in the extensive stables, none of them could compare with the black horse.

While Dan was busily engaged in rubbing down the animal, a sharp yet musical voice behind him fell on his ear, saying:

"How is Raven now? Did that young rascal do him much injury?"

Dan started and turned around, when he perceived a young girl of about seventeen standing behind him and staring at the horse with a pair of dark, piercing eyes, and with a large handkerchief covering the upper part of her head.

The girl was dressed in humble garments, yet the first glance at her features and her dark, brilliant eyes told the observant young American that she was not one of the servants of the castle, while he said to himself:

"This is not an Irish girl, as her complexion is too dark, and I bet she has Spanish blood in her veins."

Speaking in civil tones, and with a good touch of the brogue, Dan replied:

"The good horse won't be any the worse for the gallop he had, miss, and I'll engage that he will be as well as ever to-morrow."

The girl bent her flashing eyes on Dan in some surprise, as she responded, saying:

"You are a stranger here?"

"Yes, miss."

"Who engaged you?"

"Mr. Blair, miss."

The young woman drew herself up in a haughty manner, saying:

"I am Mr. Blair's daughter, and I wish you to remember that I am mistress in the house and in the stables when the family and young Master Massey are not here. What is your name?"

"Dan Donnelly, miss."

"Do you belong around here?"

"No, miss, I come from Kildare."

"But you are Irish?"

"To be sure, miss."

"Then you won't suit me, for I hate all the Irish, and I can't conceive why father employed you."

Dan smiled and bowed in an awkward manner as he retorted, saying:

"I am sorry that I do not please you, but Mr. Blair knew what I was when he employed me."

The young girl patted the horse on the shoulder, and a dark frown appeared on her beautiful face as she remarked as if speaking to herself:

"That is what surprises me, as father never employs any of the Irish in the castle, and I can't see what he saw in you to take a fancy to you."

Dan winced a little under the flashing eyes bent on him, while he said to himself:

"This young person is a regular petty tyrant, and she takes after her father very much."

The young fellow then went on cleaning the horse without

paying any attention to the young girl, who was evidently aiming to excite his anger, as she continued, saying:

"Are you the big fool who let Rory Murphy knock him down on the road?"

"I am, miss," said Dan, without looking up from his task.

"Then you must be a great coward, as you are a good deal bigger than him."

"Maybe I am, miss, but I'll wager he won't do it again in a hurry."

"Why did you let him do it at all, then?"

"Because he let fly at me suddenly when I didn't know what he was going to do," answered Dan, still keeping his head down at his work.

A scornful laugh burst from the young girl, and she gave Dan a smart blow on the back with her clenched hand, as she cried:

"What a liar you are! Didn't I see all that happened out there on the road. You deceitful wretch. Rory didn't strike you at all, and you didn't fall on the ground until after he rode away. Oh, if I had a horsewhip I would lash you now for telling such a barefaced lie and acting as you did."

Dan raised his head on the instant and stood erect before the indignant girl for a moment, when he turned suddenly and sprang into the stable, saying:

"I deserve it, miss, and you are welcome to give it to me this very minute."

Seizing a large riding-whip from a rack in the stable, the young fellow sprang out again and handed it to the young girl with an awkward bow, turning his back to her, as he cried:

"Lash away now until you are tired, as I deserve it."

The young girl seized the whip and raised it aloft as if about to lay on, when she lowered it the next instant, and cried out:

"You are a strange character. Turn your face around and let me have a good look at you."

Dan did turn his face around and looked earnestly at the young girl for a few minutes, while she bent her piercing glances at him as if she could read him through and through.

The frown then disappeared from the handsome, expressive face, and she gave him a slight tap on the shoulder with a lash of the whip as she said in milder tones:

"You are a great rogue, but you are not a coward. What is your object in coming here?"

"To get work, miss."

"None of your lying to me, as I know that you had some other object in coming here."

"It was your father asked me to come, miss, and I swear that I didn't know there was such a place in the country until I met him at the tavern in the village last evening."

The young girl continued to glare at the young fellow with her brilliant black eyes as she responded, saying:

"What was that Rory Murphy said to you as he rode away on the black horse here?"

"It was something about being a man by day and an owl by night, miss."

"What did he mean by that?"

"How do I know, miss? I never saw the boy before in my life until I met him outside the village this morning."

"What do you think of him?"

"From what I saw of him, I took him for a harum-scarum boy that isn't in his right senses."

"Then you are wrong, for Rory Murphy is in his right senses, but he is a wicked young rogue that will end his days on the gallows-tree. I think you will bear watching also, and I give you fair warning that I will keep my eyes on you. Play the owl as much as you like at night, but beware that we don't catch you at it. My father is a man not to be trifled with, and I am his daughter. I will keep this whip for the

present, and you will feel it if you attempt any more tricks with us."

The young girl then cast a scornful, threatening glance on Dan and turned away muttering to herself:

"A man by day and an owl by night, indeed. I am afraid I will have to forget that Rory Murphy once saved my life, and give him what he deserves."

Dan stared after the young girl for a moment, and then turned to groom the horse, while he could hear one of the men in the stable saying to the other:

"That lad won't be here long before Miss Maggie will touch him up with the whip."

"Miss Maggie must be a smart young lady," said Dan to himself, "but I guess she won't touch me up with the whip, or her father either."

The young Irish American did not take Rory's advice about keeping his eyes shut during the day, as he was on the watch all the time without appearing so, and he also kept his ears open to hear what the fellows around him would say about the people of the castle.

The men in the stable took their meals in the kitchen of the castle, and Dan then noticed that the girls waiting on them looked on him with as much suspicion and reserve as did his companions in the stables.

Late in the afternoon two carriages drove up to the main entrance of the castle, and Dan saw a stern-looking gentleman of forty-five, a young man about his own age, and a fair-haired girl, received at the door by Jack Blair and his daughter.

From the few words dropped around him he then knew that the newcomers were Lord Richard Massey, the owner of the castle, and his son and daughter.

When the labors of the day were over the head stableman took Dan upstairs over one of the stables and pointed to a rough bed as he said to him in gruff tones:

"You sleep there for the night."

"Very well, sir."

Dan was leaving the apartment when the fellow stopped him, saying:

"The rules here are that none of the men leave the place at night."

"Can't I take a stroll out in the park, sir?" asked Dan.

"What do you want in the park? Isn't the stable yard big enough for you to stroll around in?"

"To be sure it is, if that is the orders; but I'd like a little more liberty."

The man grumbled something between his teeth and then turned away, saying aloud:

"If you don't like the rules you can throw up your place, as we don't want any night-walkers around here."

As it was quite early in the evening, and as Dan was interested in the people of the castle, he strolled down into the stable yard and took a seat on a rough bench.

Covering his face with his hands, the young fellow peered up at the castle windows through his fingers, and he could see that bright lights were burning in several of the rooms.

"I can't imagine why it is that I am attracted to this place and to that man so much," he muttered to himself, "and I must confess that I would like to have another talk with Miss Maggie Blair."

The muttered wish was scarcely expressed when he heard a light footstep behind him, and then a low voice fell on his ear, saying:

"How is Raven now, you young rogue?"

Dan looked up in apparent surprise and found the object of his thoughts standing before him, when he replied, in respectful tones:

"The horse took his oats nicely to-night, miss, and he'll be fit to run for a fortune to-morrow if needs be."

"Why are you here all alone when the other boys are enjoying themselves in the kitchen?"

"Because I wasn't asked in, miss; because I am Irish, I suppose."

"Have they shown any ugliness to you, then?"

"Not exactly, miss, but they make me feel that I am a stranger among them."

The young girl fixed her penetrating eyes on the young Irish American, and then inquired in sharp tones:

"Were you always a stable boy?"

"I was not, miss. To tell you the truth, although it isn't well to boast about oneself, my father was in business in Dublin before he died, and I got a fair education when I was a young boy. He left me nothing at all, however, and I was obliged to turn my hand at earning a living the best way I could when he died."

The young girl still kept her bright black eyes fixed on him, as she abruptly inquired:

"Could you play the gentleman if you tried?"

Dan shrugged his shoulders and rubbed his head as if confused, as he replied:

"I don't know about that, miss, as it is a good while since I mixed with the gentlefolks."

A dark frown passed over the girl's face, and she stamped her foot impatiently on the ground, as she responded in sharper tones:

"I think, in fact, I am sure, you are trying to humbug me, but you can't do it. If you are playing the stable boy, very well, and you have deceived father, but you can't fool me."

"I am not trying to fool you, miss."

"I say you are. You are not a common stable boy, and you can play the gentleman just as well if you try to."

As the young girl spoke she stamped her foot again and cast still more angry glances at Dan from out of her dark eyes.

The young Irish American arose from his seat with a smile, the spirit of mischief entered his mind at the moment as he responded, saying:

"I'll try to play the gentleman if you want me, miss, but I am afraid I'll make a poor hand of it."

Maggie Blair started back as if highly indignant, as she demanded:

"Who wants you to play the gentleman?"

"I thought you did from the way you talked, miss."

The young girl bent her flashing eyes on him again, and then a smile appeared on her pretty face as she said in gentler tones:

"Perhaps I may give you a chance. Let me look at your hands for a moment."

Dan held up his hands for inspection, and the young girl examined them as she remarked:

"They are small and well shaped enough, but they are very rough. You have worked with them a good deal, yet I am certain you have not used them at labor so very long."

"It is over two years since I struck out for myself, miss, and I have taken a turn at everything on a farm ever since."

"Have you ever made love to the farmers' daughters?"

As the young girl put the question a quizzical expression appeared on her face, yet Dan Redmond could see that she was not exactly jesting, and he replied with a sly smile:

"It is only natural for an Irishman to do a little of the same, miss, and according to some people's ideas we are not good for anything else."

The young girl bent her head toward the ground and appeared to ponder for a moment before she bent her dark, piercing eyes on the young fellow again, saying:

"Yes, you are good for something more, and that is making

mischievous and trouble. Do you wish me to be your friend hereafter?"

"To be sure I do, miss."

"Will you do what I ask you, then?"

"I'll do anything in the world for you, miss, barring you don't ask me to make love to you."

The young girl drew back with an indignant glare, and she then burst out into a merry fit of laughter before she rejoined, saying:

"You are an impudent rascal, but I think you will do for me and for what I want you, if you have the courage and the presence of mind."

"What do you want me to do, miss?"

Speaking seriously, and yet with a droll smile in her dark eyes, Maggie Blair answered, saying:

"I want you to make love to a rich, handsome young lady this very night. I want you to dress up in a suit of gentlemen's clothes, put on a beard that I will furnish you, and obey my instructions."

Dan Redmond was staggered a little at the strange and unlooked-for proposition, but he was ready-witted, full of mischief, and fond of adventure, and he soon replied with a pleasant smile, saying:

"If you are not joking, miss, I have only to say that I have courage and impudence enough to do anything that you put me up to."

"I think you have," responded the girl with a saucy smile, "and so I judged of you when I spoke to you this afternoon. Are you willing to put yourself in my hands for this evening, and for some days to come, perhaps?"

"Forever if you like, miss."

Maggie Blair gave the young fellow a smart slap on the face as a reprimand, and then said:

"Follow me and I will give you your instructions."

In less than an hour after the young Irish American was introduced to Lord Richard Massey and his son and daughter as Frank Blair, a cousin of Maggie's, who had been residing in Dublin for some time.

CHAPTER V.

ROARING RORY AGAIN.

When Maggie Blair first proposed that Dan Redmond should play the gentleman that evening, the young fellow looked on the proposition as a practical joke on the part of the dark-eyed girl, but it did not take him long to realize that there was a deep scheme at the bottom of the proposal.

While he was very anxious to get a footing in the castle, Dan Redmond was not a person to lend his aid or take part in any scheme for a wicked purpose, and he soon made up his mind as to his course of action.

On landing in Ireland, the young Irish American had but one object in view, and that was to find out what had become of his father, as well as to punish those who may have been instrumental in causing his mother so much sorrow in her early days.

The clew in his hand for tracing his father was very slight, indeed, and not one in a hundred would have undertaken the weary task with such slim hopes of success.

But the young Irish American was formed of splendid material, and no discouragements, delays or dangers could deter him from persevering in his mission.

He had already traveled over a portion of every county in Ireland, making diligent inquiries on all sides, without gaining a single additional clew to the object he was in search of, yet he was as sanguine in the enterprise as ever, and he would continue to be so for years to come if necessary.

When he was unexpectedly approached by the dark-eyed girl that evening, Dan Redmond feared that his identity had been discovered in some way, and that she was trying to lead him into a trap.

He then remembered the questions put to him by Jack Blair at the tavern, as well as the unaccountable sensations creeping over him during the interview.

Up to that time the young Irish American had not the slightest intimation that he was nearing the object of his search, and he could not suppose that he was suspected by those whose interest it was to keep him in the dark.

While following Maggie Blair into the castle that evening, the keen youth came to the conclusion that her father and herself had seen through his assumed character, and that they were about to put him to a test for the purpose of defeating him, but he soon learned that they intended to use him as an instrument for carrying out of a deep plot for their own advancement.

Before Dan Redmond was presented to Lord Massey and his family as Frank Blair, Maggie gave him to understand that he was to make violent love to Isabel Massey, the daughter of the house, who was a wild young madcap of seventeen, and much addicted to reading romances, poetry, and sensational novels.

Jack Blair kept in the background while his daughter was instructing Dan, yet the keen-witted young fellow could understand that the man was the instigator of the plot, and that he had selected Dan at the tavern as a proper instrument.

In simple words Maggie's instructions to the young fellow were as follows:

He was to make love to Isabel Massey under the rose in as ardent a manner as possible without betraying his intentions to the stern lord or his son.

He was to induce her to run away with him and involve her in a private marriage before taking her away to America.

When the young couple arrived in America the young lady was to appeal to her stern father for forgiveness, and Maggie assured him that the appeal would be successful as Isabel was the lord's favorite child.

Funds were to be supplied to the young adventurer by the Blairs, and they were also to assist him in every other manner possible.

It can be readily understood how a high-minded, honorable and intelligent young Irish American would receive such a proposition, and Dan Redmond's first impulse was to reject the proposal with scorn, but a little reflection prompted him to place himself under full control of the Blairs, as he said to himself:

"If I show my hand too clearly the rogues will drive me from the place and get some other young fellow to play the part for them. Something tells me that I am on the right track at last, and the best thing I can do is to appear to act as their tool, find out what their real object is, and then baffle them when they least expect it."

Having thus made up his mind, Dan entered into the spirit of the affair with all the apparent zest of an unprincipled young adventurer.

Before entering on the stage in the castle he learned from Maggie Blair that she did have a cousin residing in Dublin who intended to pay them a visit at the castle that spring, and that they had received word of Frank Blair's death two weeks before his own appearance.

He also learned that Jack Blair and his daughter had full charge of the castle while Lord Massey and his family were away in England or on the Continent during the winter, and that Maggie had considerable influence with Isabel Massey, who treated her as a companion more than as a dependent.

So much did Dan Redmond hear from the young dark-haired girl, but he was indebted to his own keen observations for discovering another important clew to the plot before the night was over.

Dick Massey, the lord's son and heir, was a handsome young fellow verging on his twenty-first birthday, but Dan could soon perceive that he was a senseless snob and a heartless aristocrat.

Lord Massey himself was an aristocrat of the first water also, yet he treated Jack Blair and his handsome daughter in a very courteous manner, while a keen observer could perceive that he stood in awe of his dark-faced keeper.

When Dan noticed that fact he said to himself:

"There is a secret between them, and the lord is in the keeper's power. That is one point for me."

The pretended Frank Blair was received as a guest by the lord and his son and daughter in a way that was meant to convey that he must not intrude too much on the introduction.

The old lord was cold and stiff, yet civil and polite, acting as if he meant to say:

"You are Blair's nephew, but you must not imagine that we receive you as an equal."

Young Dick Massey was scarcely polite in his manner to the young visitor until Maggie Blair whispered some word into his ear, and he then became more genial.

Isabel Massey was civil and cordial enough to the young stranger for one in her position, but it was not until her father left the drawing-room for a time that Dan Redmond could see her in her true character.

While her father was present the young madcap was as cold as ice; but when he retired she became lively, witty and even a little forward in her bearing.

It may be readily supposed that the young Irish American had a difficult part to play, as he was actually between two fires in his strange position.

It would not do for him to act his natural character, as a well-bred young Irish American, while under the eyes of the keen and observant Blairs, while it was necessary for him to show the Masses that he was not a vulgar boor altogether.

As he was supplied with an excellent suit of clothes and a dark beard, which gave him the appearance of a man of twenty-seven, Dan felt assured that he would not be recognized again if compelled to assume his position in the stables.

It will be enough now to say that he did play the part assigned to him to the perfect satisfaction of Maggie Blair, who took occasion to compliment him on the sly during the evening by whispering to him now and again, saying:

"You are doing well, you clever rogue, and if you keep on you will win the fair lady."

When thus spoken to, toward the close of the evening, Dan cast a sly glance at the young girl and retorted:

"I can compliment you, also, young lady, and I think you are on a fair way to win the young lord that is to be——"

The young girl replied with a fearful frown, and she then hissed into Dan's ear:

"Don't you see too much, or you will get into trouble. You are in our power, and you must be our slave to the end."

Dan Redmond did not understand the threat at the time, but he was to be enlightened on the subject before many days.

The evening went by to the apparent satisfaction of all those most interested, and the pretended Frank Blair was installed as a guest in one of the best sleeping rooms in the castle that night.

Early on the following morning Jack Blair was informed by the head stableman that the "new boy" had made off during the night, and that he had stolen some money and a watch from the fellow who was sleeping in the same room with him.

"Get a warrant for his arrest, then, and notify the police

about him," replied the keeper with a wicked grin, as he turned to his daughter and continued in whispered tones:

"We hold the young loon now."

Dan Redmond enjoyed a good breakfast with Maggie Blair that morning, during which she gave him more instructions in the part he was playing, and concluded by saying:

"You are a shrewd rogue, and you will win the prize if you act the honest part with us. I am going to the village in the afternoon and I want you to accompany me."

The young man readily consented, expressing himself as most eager and willing to follow her advice in every particular.

Dan kept his eyes and ears open during the day, and he did manage to gain one piece of information that caused his heart to beat with a strange emotion.

Maggie informed him that her mother was a Mexican lady, and that her father had married her in that country while serving as a soldier in the American army of invasion when he was a young man.

About three o'clock in the afternoon the young Irish American and Maggie started for the village on foot, the young girl wearing the simple clothes in which she first appeared to him on the previous day in the stable yard.

As she had worn a rich evening costume in the drawing-room on the previous evening, the young fellow hazarded a remark about her appearing in the garb of a farmer's daughter that afternoon, when she replied with a sly smile, saying:

"It would not do for me to appear abroad dressed as a lady, as the stable boys and the busybodies around here would say that I was getting too grand, and it is my policy to be humble at present."

After making some purchases at a store in the village, the young folks were returning again when Jack Blair rode along on the splendid black horse.

Handing the parcel she held in her hand to Dan Redmond, the young girl sprang toward the rider as she cried in joyous tones:

"Oh, father, father, give me a ride to the castle on Raven, as I have said all I want to this rogue."

The horseman pulled up on the instant, reached down his hand to his daughter, and lifted her on the strong horse, saying:

"To be sure, my lass, and he is in fine humor for a good gallop."

Then away they went at a full gallop, and Dan Redmond looked after them as he muttered to himself:

"They are a smart pair, and I think I see what they are aiming at, but I will baffle them. Something whispers to me that the fellow had something to do with my father's disappearance or death, and I will solve that mystery also before I am through with them."

While the young man was muttering, he was startled by hearing a wild roar on the road ahead of him, and on looking in the direction, he perceived the black horse drawn up on the highway near some cottages, while Roaring Rory stood before him, yelling aloud to Jack Blair and his daughter, and crying:

"Ha, ha, didn't I have a fine ride on the fine horse yesterday, and no thanks to you, you black thief!"

Dan Redmond hastened on as fast as he could to witness the upshot of the strange encounter, when he perceived the wild boy stooping down on the road to pick up a large stone, which he held aloft in a threatening manner, giving another roar that caused the horse to fall back on his haunches as he cried:

"Touch me with that whip if you dare, and I'll let this fly at your pretty colleen there. She is as bad as you are almost, and it is sorry I am that I took her out of the water the day she was drowning."

Dan Redmond was still advancing as fast as he could when he saw Jack Blair draw a pistol from his coat pocket and present it at the daring wild boy as he cried in fierce tones:

"Drop that stone, you wicked loon, or I'll put a hole in your head this minute."

Maggie Blair gave a cry of alarm and seized the father's arm to push it up, as she cried in terrified tones:

"Don't fire on the poor loon, father, as it would be wanton bloodshed. Don't forget that Rory saved my life, and it would be an ill return to take his."

The stern man attempted to shake off his daughter's hands, while he took aim at Rory again, as he cried:

"Then let the rascal drop the stone and get away, as I am out of all patience with him."

Rory kept his ground for a moment or two longer, as if to show that he was not afraid of the pistol, when he sprang into the side of the road with another roar, crying:

"The colleen saves you this time, Black Jack, but I'll be even with you yet."

The young girl urged the horse forward on the instant, and the animal galloped along the road, Rory giving another wild yell that served to increase his speed.

The wild fellow then hastened on the road after the horse and its riders without appearing to notice Dan Redmond, who walked hurriedly on after him as if eager to speak to him again.

When they were some distance from the hamlet, and when the horse and its riders were out of sight, Rory cast a cautious glance around and then turned suddenly and walked back until he stood in front of the disguised Irish American, saying, with a sly grin:

"Well, I declare if the world isn't going well with you, my fine fellow."

Dan was very much surprised when he saw that the wild lad had recognized him, as he had felt quite safe in his disguise, but he made up his mind almost on the instant to treat Rory as a confidential friend, and he replied, with a wink, saying:

"You won't turn informer on me, will you, Rory?"

The wild fellow cast another cautious glance around before he replied, saying:

"That will depend on what you are at. Are you with the Blairs or against them?"

"On my soul, I am against them, Rory."

The wild boy bent his wandering eyes on the young fellow for a moment or so and then said in earnest tones:

"I believe you are the right sort, whatever tricks you play, and I will back you. Did you play the owl in the castle last night?"

"I had no chance, Rory."

"Make a chance, bad cess to you. I see how it is though, and you want my help. Don't go to sleep when you lay down to-night, and don't take off your clothes. Then maybe I'd show you something in the castle above."

Before Dan Redmond could put a single question, the wild fellow gave another roar, made a bound for the high wall and disappeared crying:

"Be a man be day and an owl be night, and maybe you will see something wonderful."

CHAPTER VI.

PLAYING THE OWL.

Dan Redmond was very anxious for an interview with Maggie Blair when he arrived at the castle, but the young girl kept out of his way as if desirous of leaving him to his own resources for the time.

At the close of the afternoon Jack Blair mounted another horse, and rode away to a neighboring town on some business connected with the estate.

Before leaving the castle he called Dan aside and said to him, in cautious tones:

"I will not be back here until to-morrow or next day. You follow my daughter's instructions, and your fortune is made. Attempt to play false to us and I will crush you as I would a reptile."

The young Irish American replied in humble tones, saying:

"I am in your hands, sir, and I will do the best I can to please you."

Very soon after Jack Blair left the castle, Dan Redmond took a stroll toward the stable as if to take a look at the horses, when great was his surprise to see Roaring Rory making himself at home with the rough fellows employed there.

The wild fellow did not pretend to recognize Dan, who was pleased to observe that the stable boys did not see through his disguise.

While the young Irish American was still strolling around the stables, a big, muscular old woman, with a very repulsive countenance, came out of the castle and ran into the stable-yard to embrace Rory, crying:

"You rogue of the world, and is it here you are again? Oh, murder alive, it is easy to know that Master Blair is away or you wouldn't be here."

Rory pushed the old woman away from him with no gentle hand and he cried:

"Don't choke me, granny, as I am not a little baby now, and don't you think that I am in dread of black Jack, for I ain't. I faced him yesterday, I faced him to-day, and I'll face him every day I can until I pay him well for the beating he gave me."

Rory's grandmother scowled at him and shook her fist as she cried:

"You will be the death of me yet, you rogue of a boy, and you will be killed yourself in the bargain."

"Somebody else will go with me then, never fear, granny, and it won't be you, either. Have you anything good to eat inside there, as I am almost starved to death."

The rough-looking old woman smiled on her hopeful grandson and turned toward the castle, crying:

"Come into the kitchen with me, my poor boy, and you will have plenty to eat and drink, but don't be playing any more of your tricks on the girls or they will scald the life out of you with the hot water."

"Bad cess to them same girls, and why will they be making love to me?" cried Rory, as he cast a sly wink at Dan Redmond, who was watching the pair with apparent indifference. "I know they are all cracked about me, and I'll marry them all, one by one, if they will only give me time, including Miss Maggie herself."

The old woman gave her grandson a playful slap on the side of the head and dragged him away, as she cried:

"You are the biggest villain alive and there is no bounds to your impudence."

Dan Redmond was strolling out in the park about an hour after when Maggie Blair approached him, saying:

"You saw what occurred with that wild rascal in the village to day?"

"I did, miss."

"And I suppose you were surprised to see him about the stables this morning?"

"I was indeed."

"Well, I want to give you a little explanation about it. Old Molly Murphy is one of the oldest servants in the castle, and she has become a privileged character here. That young rogue

Rory is her grandson, and he was kept round here also as a stable boy until father could not stand him any longer. Father gave him a beating one day for riding Raven nearly to death, and the young villain then ran away, swearing that he would have revenge. Ever since then he has kept prowling around the parks and woods, taking every chance to abuse father, who spares him on my account because Rory saved my life when the yacht upset down in the bay. I now fear that father will have to put him in prison at last, as it is impossible to cure the young wretch."

"He must be a mad fool altogether, miss."

"He is not a mad fool, as he is a great young rogue, but there is a good strain in him for all that. He hates father, and I believe he will do him a serious injury if we do not put him out of the way, yet I believe that I am a favorite of his."

"I don't wonder at that, miss."

The young girl frowned at Dan as she responded in shrill tones, saying:

"Don't attempt any of your blarney with me, as it will not have any effect on me. Address me as Maggie hereafter while you are in the castle, as it is more cousin-like. And now I want to tell you something."

"What is it, Maggie?"

"You are progressing very well, and I think you have made a favorable impression on Isabel, but young Richard Massey does not like you."

"What difference does that make if he likes you, my dear cousin Maggie?"

The young girl cast another dark frown on the young fellow, as she said to him, in still sharper tones:

"I warn you to keep your eye shut and your tongue still, as far as I am concerned. The trouble with you Irishmen is that you can never know your place, and you are always making impertinent remarks. Are you paying attention to me, sir?"

"I am, indeed."

"We will have company here to-night, and it will not be well for you to approach Isabel too often, while a little coldness on your part will serve to help you in your courtship."

"Then wouldn't it be as well for me not to appear before the grand company at all?" remarked Dan, who had an object of his own in withdrawing that evening.

"No, no; you must appear there, but you must keep in the background. It will be as well for you also to keep your eyes about you outside, and if you should see Rory Murphy prowling around you are at liberty to pick a quarrel with him and give him a good drubbing."

"I'll do that and welcome if I get the chance, as I owe him one for the way he treated me yesterday."

Maggie then gave the young fellow some general directions as to his deportment that evening, all of which he obeyed to the letter.

Several of the aristocratic neighbors appeared in the drawing-room that evening, and the observant young Irish American had a good chance of taking notes, as he said to himself during the reception:

"Well, I declare if I ever saw a sillier lot of people in my life, and I cannot wonder that the people of Ireland hate and despise their landlords and oppressors."

When the visitors departed, Maggie beckoned her pretended cousin aside and assured him that she was perfectly satisfied with his performance during the evening, while she continued, saying:

"I am firmly convinced that Miss Isabel has taken a great liking to you, but I am also certain that young Richard is suspicious of you and that he does not like you. Be on your guard with him and all will be well."

The young Irish American promised to obey his mentor as

well as he could, and he retired to his own bedroom, muttering to himself:

"That is a remarkably clever girl, and she will carry her point if I don't interfere. And why should I interfere in favor of that young snob, as she is really too good for him, unless I may be compelled to do so in carrying out my own object. Now I will wait up and see if Roaring Rory calls on me to play the owl."

It was fully an hour after retiring to his own room, and all was silent in the castle, before Dan thought of retiring to bed, as he fully expected a visit from the strange boy.

Growing weary of waiting at length, he was about to take off his clothes, when the door of his bedroom was pushed open and a subdued voice fell on his ear, saying:

"Are you ready to play the owl now?"

As Rory asked the question he stole into the room, gently closing the door after him.

"To be sure I am ready," replied Dan; "but I want to ask you a few questions first."

Rory took a seat on a chair and winked at the young Irish American as he responded, saying:

"Owls don't ask questions. Do you know what an owl is, anyway?"

"To be sure I do."

"What is it, then?"

"It is a bird that prowls around at night and sleeps in the daytime."

"More than that," said Rory, with a sly shake of his head, "The real Irish owl prowls around at night and pokes his head into holes and corners to make mischief for his English enemies. Is that what you are after?"

"Perhaps it is."

"And what else are you after?"

"I am after anything that may turn up here, Rory, and if you want to befriend me you will answer me a few straight questions."

"What do you want to know, then?"

"I want to know something about Lord Massey's relations, if you can tell me."

"Ask away, then."

"Has he a brother living?"

"He never had a brother living or dead."

"Was he ever in America himself?"

"Never that I ever heard of, but he had a first cousin that died or was killed out there long ago and who was a wild young scamp, so granny tells me."

"What was his name?"

"He was called Denmore Massey, and he was the only son of the old lord who was master here at the time. It is granny could tell you all about him if you got her in the humor."

"Are you certain that the young man died out in America, Rory?"

The wild lad pondered a few moments, and there was an owl-like expression on his rough face in the meantime before he replied:

"It seems like a dream to me that I once heard granny drop something about young Master Denmore being in some prison in England or elsewhere, but I couldn't make much out of her, as she was tipsy at the time."

"What kind of a woman is your grandmother, Rory?"

The wild boy grinned from ear to ear and then put his mouth close to Dan's ear as he whispered:

"She is a regular old limb and no mistake, if she is my granny. Oh, but it is she could tell you all the secrets of the family, if that is what you are driving at. Who are you at all and what do you want to find out?"

Dan Redmond felt that it would not be well to trust the

half-witted fellow too much, and he responded in evasive terms, saying:

"I am working for the good of the cause, Rory, and who knows but that Denmore Massey may be alive yet and one of us also?"

"That is out of the question," replied Rory with a stern shake of his head. "He may be alive, for all I know, but he is not one of the boys, as all the Masseys are rank on the English side, bad cess to them."

"Leaving that question aside, Rory, what do you want with me to-night?"

"If you are the right sort, and I think you are, I want to show you something that will give you the whip-hand of Jack Blair"

"What is that, Rory?"

"You must first promise me not to tell what you see to a living soul, only if you are put to it against Jack Blair."

"I promise you that readily."

"Then take off your shoes and steal along with me."

Being very anxious to find out the secrets of the castle, Dan Redmond slipped off his shoes and stole out into the dark hallway with the wild lad.

Rory led him along through several passages, moving in the dark as if he had really the eyes of an owl, until they arrived at the door of an apartment at the very top of the great building.

The boy then paused and listened outside the door for a few moments, when he spoke to his companion in cautious tones, saying:

"I thought the last tumbler of punch would settle old granny. Wait here for me a moment, and then I'll show you a bird that isn't an owl."

Rory then pushed the door open, when Dan could see a light burning inside, and the old woman sound asleep with her head on the table.

Stealing softly toward her the roguish boy stole a bunch of keys from her pocket and returned to the door again as he said to Dan:

"It isn't the first time I came to take a look at her bird, and the old rogue never suspects me, or she would murder me outright, for all she is so fond of me. Come with me now and be aisy."

Rory then led the way along the narrow hallway through what appeared to be a deserted wing of the castle, until he reached a strong oaken door which was secured on the outside by two bolts and an ingenious padlock.

Drawing a small taper candle from his pocket, and striking a match at the same time, the young rogue said to his companion:

"You hold the light while I unlock the door, as I know how to work it."

When the door was opened Rory led the way along a very narrow passage, holding the light in his hand until he reached the end of it, where another door opened in on a small apartment.

The second door was also secured on the outside by bolts and a lock, but Rory did not attempt to open it as he stepped before it, saying:

"You will see the bird in the cage now."

The wild boy then touched a spring, and a panel in the upper part of the door slipped aside.

Holding the light up to the opening, Rory whispered to his new friend, saying:

"Look in there now and see the bird while by the same token it comes from America."

Dan Redmond did peer in, and to his great astonishment he saw a handsome woman who appeared to be about forty

years of age, seated at a table reading a book by the light of a lamp.

The young American could perceive that the woman was dressed in clean and respectable garments, that her complexion was very dark for a white person, and that there were marks of care and suffering on her pallid brow.

Speaking in whispered tones as he thus peered in, Rory said to him:

"Take a good look at the bird, so that you may know her if you see her again, and then come away, for old granny doesn't sleep long at all."

Dan Redmond did examine the features of the woman very closely for some moments, and he then turned and nodded to Rory as if to intimate that he had seen enough.

The wild boy closed the panel and retreated toward the outer door as he whispered to Dan, saying:

"She is a purty bird, isn't she?"

The young Irish American was very anxious to make inquiries, as he felt that the prisoner was connected with his own life in some way, but he waited until the outer door was secured again before he inquired of Rory:

"Who is she?"

"Jack Blair's foreign wife, to be sure, and my Maggie's mother."

"Is she mad?"

"You know as much about her as I do, only that I know she is in there as long as I can remember. When I was only a little boy I stole after granny one night without her seeing me, and maybe I did the same about five or six times since."

"Do the other people of the house know that she is there?"

"Not a bit of it, only granny, Jack Blair and his nice daughter. Wait until we get down to your room and I'll tell you all I know."

Rory stole into the room where his grandmother was sleeping and placed the keys in her pocket.

The two young friends were about to retrace their steps in the dark, and they were proceeding along a narrow passage, when a light suddenly blazed out before them, and then a shrill voice fell on their ears, saying:

"You audacious rascals, what are you doing up here at this time of night?"

It was Maggie Blair who thus addressed them, and fierce and angry was the glare in her bright black eyes as she appeared before them in the narrow passage, holding a lantern in one hand and a small revolver in the other.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OWLS IN TROUBLE.

A cry of terror burst from Roaring Rory when the angry girl appeared before them, but the bold young rogue soon recovered his presence of mind, and he grinned in her face as he answered:

"Sure, we were only up after the owls, Maggie. And what are you doing up here at all?"

Dan Redmond drew back as far as he could, feeling very much like one who was heartily ashamed of himself, while the young girl cast another terrible glance at Rory as she continued in her sharp tones:

"And so you are after the owls, indeed? Will you tell me, you young scamp, if you have caught any?"

As she spoke Maggie slipped the pistol in her pocket, but she continued to glare at the boy in an angry manner.

Putting on a very innocent expression of countenance, the

cunning young rogue replied, reaching out his hand at the same time:

"We didn't catch a single one, my darling, but if you will give us a loan of the lantern I am sure we will, for they always fly at the light, you know."

Dan Redmond had retreated some steps in the dark passage, and he heard heavy footfalls behind him at the moment, while a rough voice in the rear cried out:

"Who is this up here at all? Do you want me to murder some of you?"

It was old Molly who spoke, and she was staggering along the passage toward the young fellows, holding a small lamp in her hand.

Dan Redmond and his wild young friend were thus caught between two fires, as it were, as the young girl barred the way in front while the ugly old woman staggered at them in the rear.

An expression of terror appeared on Rory's face for the first time on hearing his grandmother's voice, and he cast an imploring glance at Maggie Blair as he said to her in humble tones:

"Save me from granny, my darling, and I'll never come up here after owls again."

And the young fellow dropped on his knees before the girl, holding up his hands in the most abject manner.

Dan Redmond was a little terrified also as he glared back at the rough old creature, who appeared like a giantess at the moment as she staggered toward him, holding the lamp in her hand.

The young Irish American was more mortified than frightened, however, at being thus caught with the young rogue in a part of the castle so far away from his own bedroom, and he found it impossible to frame an excuse for his appearance there.

When the old woman caught a glimpse of her grandson, she pushed Dan aside and strode toward the kneeling rogue as she cried in fierce tones:

"What are you doing up here, you limb of the old boy?"

Rory uttered a fearful groan and attempted to crawl past Maggie on his hands and knees, but the young girl pushed him back, crying:

"Answer your granny, you graceless loon, and I will see to the other rogue."

Old Molly made a pounce at the trembling boy and caught him by the collar of his jacket to drag him back to the passage, as she roared out:

"What were you doing up here, you young thief?"

"I was after the owls, granny."

"I'll owl you, and put you where you'll be hungry for some time to come."

Roaring Rory screamed with terror as the powerful old woman dragged him back along the passage, dealing him smart blows on the ears at the same time.

Dan Redmond felt that it would be a great relief were some dark pit to open under him at the moment and swallow him, as he could not frame a single excuse to offer the stern girl for being caught in such a scrape.

Maggie Blair stood in the center of the dark passage glaring at him for some moments after old Molly had dragged her grandson away, and she then turned quietly as she said to him in apparently calm tones:

"Come with me now."

Holding the lantern before her, the young girl then strode on through the narrow passage without uttering a word.

Dan Redmond followed after the young girl with his head bent down on his breast as he said to himself:

"What in the mischief excuse can I give? I think the best thing I can do is to tell her the truth."

Maggie kept on until she reached the inhabited portion of the castle, when she entered what appeared to be a store-room, saying to her prisoner:

"Come in here with me."

Dan entered the room and stood before the young girl with a flushed face, while she bent her dark, penetrating eyes on him as she inquired in her shrill tones:

"Why did you go up there?"

Having made up his mind as to how he should act, the young Irish-American recovered some of his self-possession and he promptly answered:

"I went up there with Rory."

"Why did you go up there?"

"Because he came to my room and asked me to go with him."

"What did he say to you?"

"He said that he would show me some owls up there, and a foreign bird besides."

"Did you see the owls and the foreign bird?" inquired the girl, as a wicked gleam appeared in her dark eyes.

"I didn't see any owls, but I saw the foreign bird."

A scornful and sarcastic smile appeared on the young girl's face as she retorted:

"You mean to say that you saw an unfortunate lady, who happens to be my mother. I thought you were a young rogue, but I did not think that you would be so mean as to spy into the affairs of those who were befriending you."

Dan Redmond felt quite mortified at the rebuke, but as he knew full well that the young girl was not befriending him for his own sake he retaliated in curt tones, saying:

"Miss Maggie, I didn't ask you to befriend me, and I want to tell you that I didn't know what I was going to see when Rory asked me to go with him. Don't imagine that I want to throw the blame on the foolish boy, however, as I am willing to bear my share of the trouble."

Speaking in milder tones and with a gentle expression on her beautiful face, the young girl said:

"I don't know what your object was in going up there with that wicked boy, but I will say this much to you. The unfortunate lady you saw up there is my mother and she has been out of her mind ever since I was an infant. Her presence in this castle is a secret, and I am certain that my father would kill you if he knew that you were caught prying up there."

"He will never know it from me, or any one else either, Miss Blair. I confess that I was wrong to leave my room at all, and I can't account for my going up there with Rory. I don't want to beg my life of you or your father, but I swear to you now that I will never mention what I have seen unless I am compelled to."

The young girl pondered with her hands pressed on her brow, and a deep sigh then escaped from her as she said in agitated tones:

"I don't know what to say or do, and I do wish that father was present to-night. I am not afraid of Rory, as his grandmother will take care of him, but I can't trust you, as I fear that you are a deceitful wretch."

Dan Redmond was silent under the reproach, as he really did not know what to say.

At that moment the door of the store-room was burst open and old Molly sprang in, her face blazing with rage and whisky, as she glared at the young Irish American, crying:

"Is this the other villain?"

"It is, Molly," answered Maggie, in calm, yet stern tones, as she took her stand beside the muscular old woman. "What ought we to do with him?"

"We will give him the same dose as I gave Rory, of course."

Come along with me, you spying thief, and I'll teach you to be spying on me.

As the old woman spoke she seized Dan with her muscular hands, and attempted to drag him toward the door.

The active young fellow did not relish the idea of being thus treated by the rough old woman, and he broke away from her in a violent manner, drawing back in the room at the same time, as he cried, in indignant tones:

"Hands off, old woman, as I won't stand being treated like a boy. I am willing to do whatever the young lady requires, but you shan't touch me."

Maggie sprang forward and confronted the young man on the instant, as she demanded:

"Will you do what I require without offering any resistance?"

"I swear I will."

"Then come with me, or rather follow old Molly while I follow you."

The old woman cast a savage glance at the disguised young man, nodded at the young woman, and then led the way out of the room as she grumbled forth:

"I'd like to have the taming of him, and maybe I wouldn't give him a dose worse than I gave Rory. Come on and keep your word, you scamp."

Dan followed the old woman out of the room, and Maggie walked after him, saying:

"If you attempt to escape, I will be compelled to use my weapon against you."

Dan Redmond had been pondering deeply, and he had made up his mind as to the course he would pursue, as he replied in calm tones:

"I will not attempt to escape, Miss Maggie, but I want you to understand that the old woman must not attempt to strike me."

"She will not attempt it."

The old woman led the way through the narrow passages toward the room where the young men had found her sleeping, and when she reached that point she turned and addressed Maggie, saying:

"I put Rory in the strong room to the left. Will we put this scamp in with him?"

"We will."

The old woman then unlocked the strong room on the left of her own apartment, and Maggie pointed to the door as she said to Dan in sarcastic tones:

"The two owls can sleep in there together to-night."

Dan hesitated a moment or so at the threshold, and he then raised his hand to his face and tore away the false beard as he cried:

"If that is the way you treat me I'll have no more to do with you."

The young fellow then flung the false beard on the floor and strode into the room where Rory was lying on the floor.

When the young fellow flung off his disguise the old woman stared at his young face in astonishment, and she then turned and grasped Maggie by the arm as she demanded in faint tones:

"Who is he at all?"

"Lock the door and I will tell you, Molly."

The old woman's hands trembled violently as she secured the door on the outside, and the young woman noticed her agitation as she remarked in curt tones:

"You have been taking too much punch again to-night, Molly, and father will be very angry with you. Those young rogues must have stolen your keys while you were asleep in your own room."

"Who is he, I ask you?" demanded the old woman, as she

pointed her trembling finger at the door of the room where the prisoners were confined.

"He is a stranger father picked up in the village."

"What's his name?"

"Dan Donnelly; I will tell you more about him in the morning. Watch them well to-night, and see that they do not escape, Molly, as I want to settle with that young wretch in the morning."

Maggie Blair then retreated along the narrow passages, and the old woman withdrew into her own room, muttering under her breath:

"Dan Donnelly—Dan Donnelly! As sure as I am a living woman that isn't his name, and I must see him again before I sleep."

When Dan Redmond entered his prison-room, he found Rory groaning on the floor, and he gave him a rough shake, as he said to him:

"Don't be such a child, Rory. Sit up, as I want to talk to you."

"She'll kill me—she'll kill me, I know she will," groaned the unfortunate boy, as he raised his head from the floor. "Oh, why did you ever tempt me to play the owl at all with you?"

"Don't be a fool, Rory. I didn't ask you to play the owl with me. Have courage, man, and we will soon get out of this trouble."

"Never, never. You don't know what she is at all when she is in a rage."

"What do you mean?"

"Granny, to be sure. She half killed me already with a welt she gave me on the head, and she will finish me before breakfast in the morning, I know."

The door of the room was flung open at the moment, and old Molly strode in, holding the lamp in her hand.

"Here she comes to kill me now," groaned Rory, as he clasped Dan Redmond's legs for protection.

"Hush, you fool!" cried the old woman, "as I won't touch you again if you promise to be a good boy. Let me take a good look at you, sir."

The young Irish American folded his arms in a dignified way and glared back at the old woman, as he remarked with a smile:

"I hope you'll know me if you ever meet me again, my good woman."

"Where did you come from?" demanded Molly.

"From a place called Kildare."

"What is your right name?"

"Dan Donnelly."

"What brings you out here to this castle?"

"To seek work, of course. If you want to know anything more about me, ask Miss Maggie Blair."

The old woman seized the young fellow's hand and held it up to the light for a moment or so, and then turned to stare at his face again as she cried, in agitated tones:

"You didn't come here to seek employment, and I'll wager my life I know what you came for. Don't look so savage at me, because if you are what I take you for old Molly Murphy is your friend. If ever Denmore Massey had a son on this earth, you are the boy, for you are the dead stamp of him when he was in his prime."

CHAPTER VIII.

LIVING OR DEAD.

Dan Redmond was startled at the change in the rough old woman who burst into the room on him with so little ceremony.

From what he had seen of her before, the young Irish

American judged her to be a harsh, cruel, unbending old creature, who could not show any great affection for any one except her wayward grandson, Roaring Rory, and he had reason to know that she could be very severe even with that wild youth.

As the old creature stood peering at Dan's face by the light of the lamp in her hand, he could perceive that there was a kindly gleam in her eyes, that her harsh voice had become softer, and that her whole attitude was that of one who had become suddenly aroused by tender thoughts and recollections.

Fearing to betray himself too much, and knowing that he had a difficult and a dangerous part to play with all the inmates of the castle, the young man resolved to humor the old woman and gain what information he could from her without being very candid himself.

Dan Redmond was not a dissembler by nature, and he would have preferred to adopt the open and the manly course during his mission in Ireland, but he had reason to fear his secret enemies if his own identity should become known, and he was not yet assured of the ground on which he was treading.

Putting on a very innocent face, therefore, he stared back at the old woman, and remarked:

"I don't know what you mean, my good woman, and I assure you that I never heard the name of Denmore Massey before this night."

After staring at the young fellow some moments after he thus addressed her, Molly Murphy seized one of his hands and held it up to the light, just as Maggie Blair had done, and she kept muttering:

"The hands are like his also, but they are rough from toil, and it was not the way of the Masseys to do hard work. What is your real name, young man?"

The question was put in very earnest tones as the old woman fastened her keen eyes on Dan Redmond again.

"My real name is Dan Donnelly."

"And you say you were born in Kildare?"

"That is where I come from."

The young Irish American then drew back in a dignified manner as he demanded:

"Why do you ask me those questions, old woman? What have I to do with the person you speak about?"

The old woman did not seem at all offended or displeased at the young fellow's words or manner, but she shook her head in a mournful way as she muttered to herself:

"I must be mistaken; for he couldn't have a son of your age born in Ireland."

"Who are you talking about, old woman?" demanded Dan Redmond in curt tones.

"I am speaking of one who may be dead for all I know, but I pray that he is not until he comes to his own again."

"What brought you up here in this part of the castle to-night, young man?"

"I came up here with Rory, as he promised to show me some owls."

"And did you see the owls?"

"No; But I saw a lady who appeared to be a prisoner in the room beyond there."

"Why did you wear that false beard on your face here?"

"Because Maggie Blair asked me."

"Did Jack Blair see you without the beard on your face?"

"He did, as he engaged me down in the village just as you see me now."

The old creature turned her head toward the floor and closed her eyes, as if pondering deeply, while her wild grandson kept watching her with deep interest.

Roaring Rory was about to speak and plead with his grand-

mother when the old woman held up her hand in a warning manner, and addressed Dan Redmond again, saying:

"I don't know what to make of you at all, but something whispers to me that you are not what you pretend. Did Lord Massey see you without the beard?"

"He did not."

"Why did the Blairs ask you to put it on?"

"So that I could pass for Maggie's cousin."

"What did they do that for?"

"That's more than I can tell you, old woman, and I wouldn't if I could."

During the whole conversation Dan Redmond spoke with a decided Irish accent, as he had not yet made up his mind to confide in the old woman.

He had taken a great dislike to Jack Blair, and he could not forget the shuddering feeling passing over him when the man fixed his black eyes on him.

He felt assured that Maggie Blair, young as she was, was working with her father for some deep object, and while he did not dislike the young girl, he felt that she could be very dangerous and unscrupulous in working for their own interests.

Dan also realized that the old woman before him was a tool of the Blairs, that she held some important family secrets, and that she could not be relied on until further tested.

On landing in Ireland the young Irish American held very slight clues for tracing up his father, and he felt that accident must aid him if successful in his search.

Was it accident or fate that drove him to Massey Castle, and was he to find a broader clue there towards solving the disappearance of the gallant young soldier who fought in Mexico?

The appearance of the Mexican woman, the fact that Jack Blair had served as a soldier in her country, and the surprise of Old Molly Murphy on beholding Dan without the false beard, all tended to arouse the young Irish American's suspicions and lead him to imagine that he had at last struck on those who could enlighten him on the important subject uppermost in his mind, and yet he was also puzzled on some points.

If he could fully trust the rough old woman all might be well, but the mere fact that she was acting as a secret jailer to the Blairs was enough to put him on his guard in dealing with her.

After staring at him intently again, the old woman turned suddenly and left the room, while Roaring Rory cried:

"I say, granny, won't you let me go now, as Jack Blair will kill me if he catches me here in the morning."

The old woman did not pay any attention to the appeal, as she went out into the hallway and picked up the false beard flung aside by Dan Redmond, and returned with it in her hand, saying in gentle tones:

"Put this on you again, and for the life of you don't let Lord Massey see you without it. I don't know what Jack Blair is up to now, or who you are, but heaven help you if you are the lawful son of Denmore Massey."

Taking the beard from the old woman Dan adjusted it on his face again, as he responded in careless tones:

"And who was this Denmore Massey you talk so much about, my good woman?"

The old creature sighed, and a tear appeared in her eye as she replied in kindly tones:

"He was one who would be lord and master here now if he had his rights; but he was young and wild, and he was led into trouble."

"Is he dead, then?"

"He is, goodness help him. If I thought you were true, I would tell you more about him; but I can't trust one who hides himself under a false name and a false face."

Dan Redmond held down his head for a moment, and he regretted at the time that he had ever consented to pass himself off as Maggie Blair's cousin.

He did want to get into good graces with the rough old woman, yet he could not see his way at the time without betraying himself to her and to her wild son, as Roaring Rory had been listening attentively to all that was said.

From what the old creature had just said the young Irish American could imagine that she had been attached to the young man known as Denmore Massey.

He had also doubts as to the death of the man in question, as old Molly spoke of him in a manner that would lead one to suppose that he may be dead to the world and not actually in his grave.

In other words, Denmore Massey may be in a prison or a mad house, and it was all important for the young Irish American to discover the truth without betraying himself to doubtful friends or avowed enemies.

Perhaps the wiser course for him would have been to confide in the old creature and learn what he could from her, but he concluded to keep silent, and put questions to her under the plea of curiosity alone.

If Denmore Massey was really his father and suffering at the hands of enemies, the young Irish American felt that it would be his duty to use every stratagem in his behalf, especially when dealing with those who appeared to be so unscrupulous in carrying out other designs.

Smiling at the old creature in a pleasant manner, he then remarked:

"And so you say that I look like Mr. Denmore Massey, my good woman?"

"Not with that beard on you, you don't."

"Was Mr. Massey ever in Kildare when a young man?" continued the anxious young fellow with another pleasant smile.

"He was all over the country in his younger days, and he was in England and America, also."

"Where did he die, then?"

The old creature cast a suspicious glance at the disguised young fellow and then responded:

"Who said he was dead?"

"You said so awhile ago, my good woman."

"Well, well, maybe he is and maybe he isn't, but at any rate he isn't lord of his father's domain now, and his cousin, Lord Richard Massey, is master here. Why did Maggie Blair ask you to act the part of her cousin? If you want me to be your friend, for the sake of the one you resemble answer me truly."

Dan smiled again and winked at the old woman as he replied, saying:

"Perhaps she took a notion to me, and she wants me to make a decent appearance."

The old woman shook her head in a resolute manner and responded, saying:

"That isn't the game, and it doesn't matter to me what it is."

She then turned to the door again as if to lock them in, when Dan sprang out into the hallway, saying:

"I have been treated as a child long enough in this place, and I won't stand it any longer."

"Then try to act as a man," cried Maggie Blair, as she ascended the stairs, holding a lamp in her hands. "Molly, let Rory off this time, as I cannot forget that day in the bay. Young man, follow me and go to your own bedroom again. If you are wise you will not mention to my father what happened up here to-night."

Roaring Rory was delighted with the prospect of being let off so easily, and he gave vent to a cry of joy, and then grabbed Maggie Blair by the hand, saying:

"My own darling, I'll never go after the owls up here again. Don't blame this boy, for it was I who coaxed him to come up with me."

"Then come here and share my bed with me, Rory," said Dan, who was anxious to keep up his friendship with the wild lad.

The young girl led the way down the narrow stairs, followed by Dan and Rory, and the old woman stared after them, muttering below her breath:

"Living or dead, Denmore Massey, that young lad is the dead stamp of what you were, and I only wonder that Jack Blair did not notice it. If he did, it wasn't for your good that he brought you here, and if he didn't, he must be getting blind. At any rate, I'll have my eye on you, my lad, and I'll soon find out who and what you are."

When Dan Redmond reached his own bedroom Maggie bid him good-night with an arch smile, saying:

"Keep silent, and I will be your friend still. Rory can sleep with you to-night, but let him be off to-morrow before my father sees him again."

Rory grinned at the young girl, as he retorted:

"I'll never hurt you, Maggie, but I defy your father every day in the week. There is only one in this world that I am in dread of, and that is granny."

When Dan Redmond found himself in the bedroom with the wild lad, he carefully locked the door, and then drew him aside as he demanded in whispered tones:

"Do you know of any other prisoners being kept here in this castle, Rory?"

"The mischief a one only the singing bird up-stairs," promptly answered the lad.

"Could they keep a prisoner here without you knowing it?"

"Not very well, as I know every corner of the place since I was a little bit of a gossoon."

"Could you find out something from your grandmother for me and keep it a secret?"

"To be sure I could if you are fighting against Jack Blair. Granny will tell me anything when the soft spells are on her, as I am her pet."

"Then find out for me, Rory, and I will be your friend for life, whether the young man who is known as Denmore Massey is living or dead, but don't let on that I asked you to do it."

Rory winked at his new friend, and then replied:

"Trust me for that. If you are battling against Jack Blair I'll find out all I can, and I'll help you to fight him also to the bitter end. You go to bed and I'll stretch myself here on the floor."

As the rough lad spoke he flung himself on the floor, while Dan Redmond took off his outer garments as he muttered to himself:

"I have made some discoveries to-night, but I am blamed if I like the position I am in. Still, if I thought that I was on the right track in looking for my father, I would be justified in using almost any means in working against his enemies."

It was some time before the Irish American could close his eyes in sleep, as he was ruminating over the strange incidents of the evening, but Roaring Rory was soon snoring away on the floor, having positively refused to share the soft bed with his new friend.

When Dan Redmond awoke on the following morning Rory had disappeared from the room.

When the young fellow went down stairs in his disguise Maggie received him as usual, and she did not show any signs of displeasure for his adventure on the previous night.

The young Irish American looked around for Roaring Rory, but could not catch a glimpse of the wild lad.

He did see the rough old woman going around in the servants' quarters, but old Molly took no more notice of him than she would of any other strange guest.

During the afternoon the anxious young fellow took a stroll out into the park in the hope of meeting Rory, and he was not disappointed.

On gaining a secluded spot the wild lad appeared before him, saying:

"Granny was in good humor this morning and I found out what I could of the young lord."

"What did you find out, Rory?"

"I found out that he was in prison long ago for something or another that wasn't very good."

"Is he there still?"

"Granny couldn't tell me, or whether he was living or dead."

"Where is the prison, Rory?"

"That I couldn't tell you. If you want to find out any more about him you will have to talk to her yourself and tell her what you are driving at. If granny wants to befriend you she will be as true as steel. If you are working against Jack Blair you may trust her with your life, for she hates the very ground he walks on."

Dan Redmond pondered over the advice thus given him, and while he thanked Rory, he said to himself:

"It may be a matter of life and death and I must not act hastily. I have no proof yet that Denmore Massey was my father, and I must not confide in any one until I am certain of it."

"There is something else I found out from granny," continued Rory, "and it is about the singing bird we saw last night."

"You mean the foreign lady?"

"I do. She isn't Jack Blair's wife at all, as she is the wife of the young master who was put in prison long ago. She is out of her mind ever since he was put in prison, as she found out somehow when she landed in Ireland with him that he had another wife somewhere's else and that nearly broke her heart."

Dan Redmond started on hearing the information, and he then eagerly inquired:

"And is the mad woman really Maggie's mother?"

"To be sure she is, but Jack Blair isn't my darling Maggie's father at all, and I won't show him any mercy after this."

Dan Redmond continued to talk with Rory for some time, when the wild lad left him, saying:

"I must be off now, as Jack Blair has come back, but maybe I would see you to-night again."

The young Irish American remained on the spot for some time pondering over the strange news he had received, and as he was turning away to retrace his steps toward the castle he perceived a dark figure gliding away through the trees.

"It is Jack Blair," he said to himself, "and I fear he has been listening to us. If such is the case I am in danger here now."

CHAPTER IX.

DAN REDMOND IN DANGER.

Although Dan Redmond was certain that it was Jack Blair who was spying on him in the park while he was conversing with Rory, neither the keeper nor his daughter displayed any marks of displeasure that evening.

On the contrary they were both more civil and attentive to him than before, but those attentions served to increase Dan's suspicions and put him on his guard.

The young man did not make any advances toward Isable Massey that evening, as he was ashamed of the part he was playing, while he was becoming strangely attracted to the young girl at the same time.

He saw that the young creature had a good heart, that she was kept down by her father and brother, and that she was naturally of a sweet disposition.

Before retiring to his bedroom that night Dan Redmond heard that Roaring Rory had been arrested in the neighboring village in the evening, and that the wild lad had been taken away by the police to a strong jail in the next town on charges made against him by Jack Blair.

The young Irish American felt very much inclined to pay another visit to old Molly Murphy to inquire about her grandson, and also to satisfy himself on some other matters, but he feared that the watchful Blairs would be on the alert if he ventured from his own bedroom.

Dan Redmond also noticed that Lord Massey and his snobbish son treated him with chilling coldness that night and he said to himself:

"I would just like to meet that young snob somewheres on equal terms and then he wouldn't put on so many airs to me. I would give a good deal to know if Jack Blair really heard Rory and I talking in the park this afternoon."

The question was haunting Dan in his bedroom that night, and he flung himself on a chair to ponder over the subject.

While thus pondering the bedroom door was pushed open and Jack Blair appeared before him.

Dan Redmond felt the cold chill creeping over him again as the dark eyes of the man were fixed on him with an ominous glare while he said:

"I wanted to have a talk with you to-night, young man, and I want you to answer me some simple questions."

Shaking off the strange feeling that was on him, Dan looked at the man with fearless eyes as he inquired:

"What do you want to ask me, sir?"

"You were talking with Rory Murphy to-day in the park, and he told you some family secrets. What business is it of yours to pry into the secrets of this castle?"

Dan Redmond saw at once that he was in for a serious quarrel, and he responded boldly, saying:

"I wasn't spying into the secrets of the castle. Rory told me some things, and I consider that I have a right to listen to them, seeing the position that you and your daughter have placed me in here."

A fearful frown appeared on Blair's face, and he advanced a step or two in a threatening manner as he demanded:

"Do you know that you are in our power here and that we can clap you in prison if you attempt to play us false?"

"What could you clap me in prison for, Mr. Blair?"

"On two charges. We can prove that you are a thief, as you disappeared from the stables the other night while acting as a stable boy, and you stole a watch and some money."

Dan Redmond stared on learning the accusation, and he realized at once that he was caught in a trap, but he soon replied in manly tones:

"I didn't steal the watch and money, and I defy you to prove it, sir."

A sneer appeared on the face of Jack Blair as he retorted, saying:

"Perhaps we can't prove either that you came here to this castle under false pretenses, that you are representing yourself as my nephew, and that you have no right whatever to the name you bear?"

"It is true that I am here in disguise and under a false name, but wasn't it you and your daughter put me up to it?"

"Who will believe that we put you up to such a scheme? We can also prove that you are a member of a secret society, and that you are here to spy on Lord Massey and his son, and to betray the castle into the hands of the patriots in the neighborhood. You say that you are an Irishman born and bred, when we can prove that you are not more than a year

in the country, and that you were born and reared in America."

Many thoughts flashed through the young Irish American's mind as he stood there before that dark featured man, and he said to himself:

"I have been a fool, but this rascal and his employer cannot frighten me. I have learned a lesson, and hereafter I will adopt the open, manly course even in dealing with treacherous enemies."

Dragging the false beard from his face, the young man sprang to the fire that was burning in the grate and flung it in the blaze as he cried:

"It was you and your daughter tempted me to play the humbug, and whoever I am, you will not trick me in a hurry again. Call in the police now, as I suppose you have them on hand, and you will see how I defy you!"

Jack Blair made a forward movement, as if to lay violent hands on the young man, but old Molly Murphy sprang into the room on the instant and caught him by the arm, saying:

"Don't you touch that lad, Jack Blair. Mind who he looks like, and I will stand his friend against the whole world."

The strong man drew back before the old woman, the false beard blazing up in the fire-place at the same time.

Old Molly then turned on the young Irish American, and demanded:

"What is your real name, young man?"

"It is Dan Redmond, my good woman."

"What is your father's name?"

"That was his name also."

"Where were you born?"

"I am not on my trial now," answered the young Irish American, "and I refuse to answer you before that man."

"You will have to answer before a magistrate then," cried Jack Blair, "as I will have you arrested at once."

Old Molly turned and stared at the speaker as she cried, in sneering tones:

"You are very good at arresting young people; but first let me know what you charge him with?"

"Robbery and false pretenses."

"Let me ask you," continued the old woman, "if it wasn't you and your daughter put him up to wearing that false beard, and taking the name of your nephew?"

"We did nothing of the kind, you old hag. Go up to your room, and don't meddle with me."

The old woman advanced, holding up her clenched hand, and shook it in Jack Blair's face, as she cried:

"I'll go up to my room, but this young man will go with me, and hinder him if you dare. Don't give me any of your black looks, or I'll soon make you sorry. Out of my way with you! You promised to let my Rory alone, and you sent him off to prison this evening."

Then seizing Dan Redmond by the arm, she dragged him out of the room, and led him along toward that portion of the castle where the mad Mexican woman was kept as a prisoner.

Jack Blair glared after the old woman and the young Irish American, and he clenched his hands and ground his teeth as he muttered to himself:

"I'll have to take another course with that young fellow now, and with the old hag also. I will consult with Lord Massey, and then we will see if we cannot crush the young viper."

Old Molly led the way along the dark passages without saying a word until she reached the apartment where she was found asleep on the previous night.

She then raised the lamp from the table, and scanned his features again, as she inquired:

"You saw the dark lady inside there last night?"

"I did."

"Then come and see her again."

Holding the light before her the old woman led the way again to the strong door, and as she drew back the bolt she inquired of Dan Redmond:

"Did you ever see that lady before?"

"Never that I remember."

"Are you certain that she is not your mother?"

"I am very certain that she is not, as my mother has fair hair, and she is not like the poor woman in there at all."

"Is your father alive?"

"I cannot tell."

"And you say he was known as Dan Redmond?"

"That is the name he bore when he married my mother."

Hastily opening the door, she caught the young Irish American by the hand and led him in before the prisoner, crying:

"My good lady, do you know this young gentleman?"

The Mexican woman sprang up from her chair and glared at Dan Redmond for a moment or so, when a cry of astonishment and joy burst from her as she sprang forward to fling her arms around his neck, as she sobbed forth:

"It is my dear husband, Captain Redmond, come back to me again!"

She had scarcely embraced the astonished Dan, when her arms relaxed, a deep sigh escaped from her, and she would have fallen to the floor in a swoon if old Molly had not caught her in her arms.

Placing the poor creature on a bed in a very gentle manner, the strong old woman seized Dan by the arm again and drew him from the room, saying:

"She will be herself again in a short time and she will think it was all a dream. Now I know that you are Denmore Massey's son, no matter who your mother may be."

The old woman hastily locked the inner door, and then drew the young man along the passage, as she continued saying:

"You mustn't stay here a minute longer than you can help, as there is danger in Massey Castle for you. Where is your mother living now?"

"Away in New York."

"What name did you say your father married her under?"

"He called himself Dan Redmond, and he was just out from Ireland at the time."

"What became of him thereafter?"

"He went away to the war in Mexico, and he was reported missing there after the war."

A deep sigh escaped from the old woman as she led Dan back to her own room, muttering to herself:

"Heaven forgive you, Denmore Massey, as you were always a wild clip."

Having reached her own apartment the old woman addressed the young fellow in stern, earnest tones, saying:

"You must leave this castle at once, as your life is in danger here. Come with me, and I'll lead you down to the stables where we can get a good horse. Then you must ride away as fast as you can and hide until you hear from me again."

"I'll not leave here," said Dan, in stubborn tones, "until I know that my father is living or dead."

"He was alive when I last heard of him, but he is dead to the world outside. If you would save him and serve him fly from here at once. Come with me now, and I'll lead you down into the yard by the secret way. I wouldn't wonder at all that Rory would be around here somewhere to-night."

"I thought Rory was taken away to prison?"

"He was taken away, but that doesn't say that he will not get off again. Come with me, and you may see him before you go very far away. Have you money?"

"Plenty of it."

"So much the better, as your enemies are rich and powerful, and you have a hard battle before you, for your father's sake, rich or poor. Was it for his sake you came to this place?"

"It was, Molly."

"I thought it was when I saw you here last night, and it is a pity you didn't tell me the truth then. Make haste, and come with me before Jack Blair and the other villains get at you."

As the old woman thus spoke she led the young Irish American down another narrow passage, while they could hear footsteps hastening up from the direction of his late bedroom.

CHAPTER X.

IN QUEST OF HIS FATHER.

With no light to guide her, the old woman led the way down several narrow passages and winding stairs, holding the young Irish American by the hand.

At first they could hear footsteps and loud voices above them, but the sound soon died away, and then all was silent throughout the castle.

Silence reigned in the yard behind the high building, and the old woman led Dan Redmond out into it, as she whispered to him, saying:

"You must take the best horse in the stable, and that is Raven. Then ride across the country toward Cork City as fast as you can."

"Tell me where my father is, I beg of you."

"When I last heard of him, he was on the convict station known as Spike Island down in Cork harbor."

"What was he accused of, Molly?"

"High treason and murder."

"Was he guilty?"

"That you will have to find out for yourself. Others believe that he was, but I never could believe it. He was wild and headstrong, but he had a good, kind heart, and he was my darling boy."

"Did you hear of his death, Molly?"

"I heard a rumor of it, but I don't believe it. Something tells me that you will see him alive yet, and so will I, if you are brave and true."

They had reached the stables, and Dan Redmond was putting a bridle and saddle on the good horse, while the old woman kept watch on the door.

Lights were flashing through the windows of the castle, and the voice of the keeper was soon heard ringing out in alarm:

"The young rogue must have got out with the old hag. Let us out and look for him."

"Out with the horse," said the old woman, "and mount and away as fast as you can go. Don't take the high roads, for the soldiers and police are out to-night. Ride along the lawn to the left and take the first low spot over the wall you can find."

Dan Redmond pressed the old woman's hand and sprang on the black horse just as some of the doors of the castle were flung open.

Then out rushed Jack Blair and Lord Massey, followed by several of the male servants, the former crying:

"Mount and after him!" cried Jack Blair, "but don't fire on the good horse. Ring out the alarm, and the officers and soldiers will be on the lookout for him along the roads."

The fugitive dashed out on the green lawn and then along toward a low portion of it he had noticed on that afternoon.

The stablemen were aroused, and several of the fastest

horses were prepared hastily for the chase, while out rang the alarm bell from the castle.

Instead of riding along the public road, Dan faced the horse over another wall and dashed through the park inside.

The young fugitive did not proceed far through the park when a familiar cry fell on his ear and a dark form darted to his side, crying:

"Is that you, my bold boy, that is taking a ride on the good horse to-night?"

It was, Roaring Rory who thus spoke, and Dan at once answered him in joyful tones, crying:

"I am delighted to see you, Rory. How did you get away from the police?"

"I gave them the slip, of course. All the ugly peelers in Ireland couldn't hold me."

The wild lad kept running along, and he bent his ear to listen at the moment before he remarked:

"And where are you going now?"

"I am riding for Cork City as fast as I can."

"Then I am just the boy to show you that way, and I'll go there with you every step. Come down this way to the left with me and I'll soon mount also."

The wild boy led the way through a narrow path, and they were soon out on a large meadow where several young colts were grazing in the moonlight.

Drawing a piece of rope from his pocket Rory made a dart at one of the colts and quickly formed a rough bridle on his head.

They kept on through the lane at the best speed the horses could bear them, and Dan Redmond could note that they were soon leaving their pursuers behind.

The two fugitives soon dashed into a wood and then up a mountain, Rory crying:

"We will soon be safe now, if all the peelers in Ireland were after us."

When they were about half way up the mountain side Dan Redmond looked back, saying:

"They aren't following us now, Rory."

Then Rory sent forth one of his wild roars that could be heard above and below for some distance.

An answering shout was heard above, and then Dan Redmond could see several dark forms on the top of the mountain.

As they drew near the end of the path a loud voice rang out on their ears, crying:

"Who comes there?"

"Friends to the old cause, of course," promptly answered Rory.

"What's the word to-night, then?"

"Over the water."

"Advance, friends!" cried the voice above.

Rory and his friend did advance until they reached the mountain top, when they found themselves surrounded by about a hundred young men who had been drilling with sticks and old muskets on an open square.

The leader of the party was a young Irish American soldier with whom Dan Redmond was acquainted in Dublin, and he welcomed him to the rendezvous in the warmest manner possible, saying:

"Rory here told me that you were over in the castle of the enemy, Dan Donnelly."

"And so I was, Conway, but I had to fly from there to-night."

"Where are you bound for now, or do you want our assistance against the enemy?"

"Not at present, thank you, but I may want your aid soon. I am bound for Cork city as soon as I can get there, my friend."

"That is fortunate," answered Ned Conway, who was one

of the most popular of the young Irish American leaders in the country, "as I am going to Cork as soon as I can in the morning, and we can travel together."

"Why not come at once, Conway? Rory here says he can guide us by the shortest cuts without taking us on the public roads, and I am anxious to strike the city before daylight."

The young leader of the mountain patriots pondered a few moments and then replied, saying:

"Our work is over here to-night, and I may as well go in with you."

He then called for his horse, as he cried to his friends around him:

"Disperse quietly now, boys, and I will be with you again next week."

Roaring Rory and his two friends then set out across the mountain, taking lonely paths that led toward the city and avoiding all public roads as much as possible.

Captain Ned Conway, as he was known to his friends, was a very intelligent young Irish American officer who had served in the Southern army during the Civil War strife, and who was then aiding and organizing the peasants of Ireland for an expected revolution.

As Dan Redmond had identified himself with the patriotic party before leaving New York and after landing in Ireland, he could converse freely with his new friend on the hopes and aspirations of the people.

They arrived in the City of Cork before daybreak, and they all found a safe refuge in a small hotel on the outskirts.

Dan made arrangements for sending back the horses on the following night, while Roaring Rory vowed that he would stick to his new friend through thick and thin.

After resting for some hours, Captain Conway went out in the city to secure disguises for his two friends, as it would not do for Dan or Rory to be recognized by the police officers or detectives.

It was late in the afternoon when the young soldier returned with very important information for his friend.

Dan Redmond then learned that the old convict who had escaped from Spike Island was the person formerly known as Denmore Massey, that he had been several years serving a life sentence there, and that he had been arrested and convicted through secret influence very soon after returning to his native land from America.

The young soldier could not tell what had become of the escaped convict, but it was supposed that he had fled to the mountain lying in the direction of Massey Castle, as he had told those who rescued him that he had secret friends living in that direction.

Dan Redmond and Roaring Rory took a walk out through the city that night together in thorough disguises, and as they were strolling through one of the principal streets the young Irish American gave vent to an exclamation of surprise on seeing a well-dressed woman passing him.

That woman was the young man's own good mother, who had just landed in Ireland in search of her son and her long-lost husband.

CHAPTER XI.

FRIENDS AND FOES AFTER THE CONVICT.

The young man's first natural impulse was to address his mother in the street, but he soon changed his mind and followed her, as he said to his wild companion:

"Rory, my friend, take notice of that lady walking ahead of us, and I'll get you to follow her wherever she goes."

"Very good, my boy," answered Rory, "but may I ask who she is at all?"

"I will tell you hereafter."

At that very moment Jack Blair and Lord Massey passed along the street in the same direction taken by Mrs. Redmond, and her keen-eyed son could notice that his enemies' eyes were on her also.

Safe in their own disguises Dan and Rory strolled along, and they soon saw Mrs. Redmond entering the side door of one of the prominent hotels.

Jack Blair and Lord Massey followed her soon after, and Dan whispered to Rory, saying:

"You remain outside here while I go in. Watch Lord Massey and Jack Blair and the lady also. Keep your eye on her wherever she goes, and report to me where we are stopping if I do not see you within two hours."

The wild boy promised to obey his friend to the letter, and Dan boldly entered the hotel, where he found Jack Blair examining the register.

While Dan was pondering as to what course he should pursue, Captain Conway entered the hotel.

As the young officer knew Dan in his disguise, he addressed him as a passing acquaintance and then quietly whispered to him, saying:

"I have some more news for you; follow me into the street."

Dan did follow his friend out into the street, and as he passed Rory he said to him:

"Keep on the watch here, my dear boy, and do not lose sight of the lady if she comes out again, which is not likely, as it is getting late."

The anxious young man then followed his soldier friend into a silent street, and they were soon seated in a private house, which was the residence of an ardent patriot.

"What is the news?" eagerly demanded Dan.

"The man you are so much interested in has certainly made off in the direction of Massey Castle, and the English detectives are on his trail. I have the information from a police-sergeant, who is a secret member of our organization, and it is perfectly reliable."

Dan Redmond then held an earnest consultation with his clever young friend, who volunteered to gain an interview with Mrs. Redmond without attracting the attention of her watchful enemies.

"I will manage to see your mother and have an understanding with her if you will give me a short note to show that I am your friend," said Ned.

Dan gave the introduction without the slightest hesitation, and Ned Conway hastened around to the hotel.

It was fully an hour before he returned to where the anxious son awaited him, and he at once said to Dan:

"I had a long talk with your mother and she is a splendid lady. I waited until Lord Massey and his man left the hotel, and that is what kept me so long. Your mother is almost crazy to see you, but when I told her that you were both watched by secret enemies, she at once agreed to leave the future meeting in our hands."

Captain Conway then suggested that Mrs. Redmond should leave the hotel in disguise that night and proceed to a town near Massey Castle, where her son could meet her on the following night.

"I will escort your mother there and welcome," said the gallant young officer, "as I can disguise myself also. I am not afraid of Lord Massey, his man, or their English detective friends. You can travel back with Rory by the paths we came here, and we can meet to-morrow night in the town I mentioned."

Having completed their arrangements, Dan Redmond hastened out to find Rory, who was then keeping watch on Lord Massey and Jack Blair.

On returning to the quiet hotel the anxious son made up his mind to use the horses taken from Massey Castle in their journey back again.

With the aid of a smart stable-boy Rory changed the appearance of the horses, so that even Jack Blair himself could not readily recognize Raven.

About ten o'clock that night the two friends started back on the return journey.

Dan Redmond felt that he had important work before him, and that he must save his unfortunate father at all hazards.

Rory and the young Irish American made splendid time on the return journey, as they took short cuts through the lanes and fields, and they reached the mountain overlooking Massey Castle a little before midnight.

Rory led his friend to a hiding-place on the mountain, where several outlawed men were resting at the time.

On making some inquiries from those in the hiding-place Dan Redmond learned that a stranger had appeared on the mountain early that morning, closely pursued by the police and detectives, and that the man was supposed to be an escaped convict from Spike Island.

He also learned that the fugitive had made off in the direction of Massey Woods, that he seemed to be well acquainted with the locality, and those speaking to the two young friends believed that he had found a hiding-place under the rocks along the coast, as no report of his capture had reached them.

The young Irish American then made up his mind to hasten to the coast with Rory in quest of his father, the wild lad being only too willing to show him the hiding-places along the rocks.

Leaving the horses in the park near Massey Castle, the two friends traveled on foot toward the coast which was only a few miles distant.

Just as they reached a wild spot overlooking the bay, Rory turned and perceived a female figure hastening on after them, and he at once recognized her in the moonlight, as he cried:

"Be the powers, here comes granny, and I hope it isn't after me she is. What can bring her away so far from the singing bird she is minding at all, and at this hour of the night?"

The two young friends then retreated behind a large rock and Rory sent forth a shrill cry that startled the grandmother for the moment.

The old woman hastened on, however, and soon stood before the two young friends in the shelter of the rock.

Rory was disguised as an old countryman and Dan as a well-to-do farmer of middle age.

The young Irish American at once addressed the old woman in his natural tones, saying:

"Good Molly, I am the young man you know as Dan Redmond, and this is Rory himself."

Without taking any notice of her disguised grandson, the old woman advanced and stared eagerly into the face of the young American as she demanded:

"Did you hear the news from Spike Island?"

"I did, Molly."

"Do you know that Denmore Massey is hiding near here now?"

"I heard as much, Molly."

"Then let me tell you that the hounds and beagles of the law are coming on his track, and if you are his son now is the time to prove that you can fight like a man for him. I heard them in the castle—his deadly enemies I mean—planning to come over here after him, as they are certain that they can track him to his hiding-place."

"Then for goodness sake tell us where that hiding-place is, Molly, and I will stand by him till the death."

"Come with me, and I will show it to you."

CHAPTER XII.

THE HUNTED CONVICT.

Old Molly led the way down the steep cliff, and until she reached the strand below not a word did she utter.

The old woman led the way into a dark and dreary cave beneath the rocks, moving as silently as possible, while Dan imitated her example.

On entering the dreary place she drew forth a small lantern from under her cloak and flashed the light around as she said in the Irish tongue:

"It is a friend that's here, and don't you fear to come out."

The words were scarcely uttered when a wretched-looking being, clothed in rags and wearing an old felt hat drawn over his eyes, appeared before them, saying:

"I ought to know that voice, though it is long since I heard it."

It will be remembered that Dan Redmond was disguised as an old farmer since he left Cork City.

"This is a friend of mine who has come to serve you," answered the old woman, "but we can't stay here long, as the hounds are on your track."

The convict started and stared back at his hiding-place, as he inquired:

"Then where will I go, Molly?"

"To the castle, of course."

"To the castle!" exclaimed the convict, in great surprise. "What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that you will be safer there than anywhere else at present."

The convict started on seeing Rory, but he appeared to be satisfied when the old woman moved toward the mouth of the cave, crying:

"Come on, all of you, as fast as you can, and follow me one by one. Watch your steps, if you don't want to sleep your last sleep to-night."

The old woman led the way along the foot of the cliff until she came to a steep path leading upward.

On reaching the park behind the castle Molly sent Rory forward, saying:

"Slip ahead, you rogue, and see if the way is clear for us to get in the back way."

The wild lad darted away in a stooping form as he replied:

"I'll be back in a jiffy."

"Can it be possible that he is your grandson, Molly?" inquired the convict when Rory had darted away out of the trees.

"Faith, and he is."

"And is this man disguised also?"

"He is, sir."

The convict then grasped Dan Redmond by the hand as he said to him in earnest tones:

"My good friend, whoever you are, I thank you from my heart, and I hope to repay you one of these days."

Dan could not utter a word in reply but he kept saying to himself:

"Is this man really my father, and is he guilty of a great crime?"

Rory was soon back, reporting the coast clear.

The old woman led the way again in silence and Dan Redmond soon found himself ascending the secret winding stairs

leading up to the deserted wing of the castle where the mad woman was kept a prisoner.

On reaching her own bedroom the old woman said to Rory:

"Take off your shoes and go down to the lower landing. Hasten back here again if you see or hear any one coming up this way."

Taking the lamp from the table she then said to the old convict:

"You come with me, and let our friend here wait for us."

Leaving Dan Redmond in the dark room, the old woman led the way toward the apartment where the mad woman was confined.

It was not many minutes before Molly appeared with the convict again, and she cast a significant glance at Dan Redmond, as she said:

"Now, Denmore Massey, I want to ask you a few fair questions."

"What are they, Molly??"

"First and foremost, were you in a part of America they call Mexico?"

"Certainly I was, as I served there in the American army."

"You had a good look at that lady I showed you up in the room?"

"I had, Molly."

"Did you make love to any young girl in that country?"

"On my word I did not, as we had too much fighting and marching for any such nonsense. Besides, I had a dear wife in New York at the time."

Before the convict could say any more Rory appeared before them, saying:

"Gran, gran, my Maggie is coming this way and you must hide us."

"Into the strong room with you then," said the old woman, springing out of the apartment and motioning to the others to follow her.

The two young fellows and the convict were soon locked in the strong room, and old Molly was back in her own apartment again when Maggie Blair appeared before her with a lamp in her hand, saying:

"I was up here an hour ago, Molly, and I could not find you."

"I was out taking the air in the park, as it is very little of it I get," answered the old woman in sharp tones.

"Lord Massey is not home at present, as he is out hunting a convict who escaped from Spike Island recently, and who was seen lurking in the eastern wood."

The old woman made a sudden spring and seized the young girl by the shoulders, as she hissed forth:

"Maggie Blair, you see too much, and I must see to taking care of you for a while. March back there and put the lamp on the table, and don't attempt to draw your pistol on me."

The young girl did attempt to draw her small revolver, but the muscular old woman soon overpowered her and made her prisoner, saying:

"As Jack Blair is so fond of hunting down others, maybe he could hunt you down now."

CHAPTER XIII.

MYSTERY IN MASSEY PLACE.

"I tell you, Blair, the girl has run off after that young rascal."

It was thus that Lord Massey expressed himself on the following evening as he was seated in his library with his confidential keeper.

A scowl appeared on the face of the man spoken to as he replied in rather sullen tones:

"I don't agree with you, my lord. Maggie is not the girl to disgrace herself in that way, and besides I am certain that she did not care for the young rogue."

Motioning to Blair to follow him, the angry man left the room and hastened toward the deserted wing of the castle.

Old Molly was seated at her table when her master burst in on her, crying:

"You old hag, do you know that Maggie Blair is missing from the castle?"

The old woman stood up and bowed, and she responded in sharp but respectful tones:

"I heard about that, my lord, but what is it to me what becomes of the girl?"

"Do you know where she is?"

"How could I know, sir? Haven't I enough to do to look after one person?"

"I want to pay a visit to that person at once," said Lord Massey in tones that would not admit of a denial as he pointed the way.

The mad Mexican woman was reclining on a sofa when Molly entered the room, but she sprang up almost on the instant, crying:

"My good friend, where is my dear husband that I saw the other night?"

"Here I am, Ina!" answered Lord Massey, as he walked into the room.

The woman stared at him with her glaring eyes, and then made a repulsive movement with her hand, as she cried:

"Do not mock me, man, as you are not the brave youth that came here to me."

The mad woman then seized the lamp standing on the table and advanced to hold it before Lord Massey's face, as if to examine his features carefully.

A puzzled expression then stole over her own face, and she pressed her hand to her forehead as she muttered aloud:

"I cannot understand it. You came to me recently as you appeared long ago in Mexico, and now you are changed again."

"Years change us all, dear Ina," remarked Lord Massey with a pleasant smile.

While thus replying, Lord Massey raised the lamp from the table and moved toward the inner door.

At that moment the Mexican woman gave a fearful scream and darted out of the door into the narrow passage as she cried:

"I go to seek my beloved one!"

The old woman gave a cry of alarm and darted after the mad creature.

Lord Massey darted after the old woman, uttering a fierce imprecation ere he cried:

"Confound her, as she will play the mischief if she meets Jack Blair!"

The mad woman appeared to be attracted by the light in old Molly's room as she darted toward it with agile steps, and sprang in on Jack Blair before the old woman could reach her.

The keeper sprang up from a chair and stared at the Mexican woman, crying:

"What brought you here?"

Darting at the man with her hand bent like claws, she seized him by the hair and dragged him around with great fury as she cried:

"I came for my husband, you wretch. Where is he, or I will tear you to pieces!"

Jack Blair appeared to be stunned by the onslaught as he sank on the floor crying:

"Take her away, take her away, or she will claw me to death!"

Molly sprang in after the mad creature and caught her arms, crying:

"Be quiet now, good lady, and I will show you where to find your husband."

"Good Molly, I believe you. Take me to him at once and I will bless you."

At that moment a manly form appeared at the door, and the moment the woman perceived him a cry of joy escaped from her lips, as she sprang to clasp Dan Redmond around the neck, crying:

"This is my dear husband now, and oh, I am so happy!"

Lord Massey and Jack Blair glared at the young Irish American with angry eyes.

Making a motion to Jack Blair, the stern lord sprang suddenly on the young man and caught his arms.

Dan Redmond did not attempt to struggle in the grasp of his enemies at the moment, but the Mexican woman darted at them and made a grab at Jack Blair with her clawish hands.

A general struggle then ensued, during which Maggie Blair and Roaring Rory appeared on the scene.

While the struggle was going on the lights were blown out by some one who stole into the room unperceived by the others.

The lamp was lit again, but when they looked around they found themselves alone in the room.

No trace of Molly or any of her friends could be found.

Lord Massey asked Maggie where she had been, and she told him she did not know.

Then Lord Massey raved like a madman, and he was thus raving when his son appeared on the scene, crying:

"I have good news for you, father."

"What is it, Richard?"

"The escaped convict has been taken."

"Where?"

"He was caught in a tavern in the town by one of the patrolling parties."

A joyous cry escaped from the lord and he then exclaimed:

"Then the danger is over, as he will go back to his living tomb again."

"Let us go to the town at once, my lord," said Jack Blair, "and then we will escort him back to Spike Island at a fast rate."

Their horses were brought and they rode away.

"Ride fast, Jack Blair," cried a voice at the window, "and then you will see if you will be in time."

Then followed the loud roar they knew so well, while Rory darted away toward the stable, yelling:

"The fight has commenced now in earnest, and hurrah for the right side!"

CHAPTER XIV.

A STRUGGLE FOR THE CONVICT.

Maggie Blair spoke the truth when she told Lord Massey that she did not know where she had been since the previous night.

When old Molly overpowered the young girl she bound her arms, placed her on the bed in the large room and threatened her with more serious violence if she attempted to raise an alarm.

With the assistance of Rory, the young girl was then removed to a small sleeping apartment known only to the old woman and her grandson.

While old Molly and Rory were conveying Maggie to the secret room, the convict and Dan Redmond remained in the strong room.

A few whispered words were only exchanged between father and son until old Molly and Rory appeared before them again.

A consultation was then held, in which Dan Redmond played the part of a warm-hearted stranger, who was willing to aid in the escape of the convict for Molly's sake.

It was then agreed that the convict should assume the disguise worn by Dan Redmond, and leave the castle before daylight.

The exchange was effected without the convict getting a chance at viewing his son's features in their natural appearance, and the hunted man left the castle before daylight, accompanied by Rory.

It was Captain Conway who blew out the light while the struggle was going on in the castle, and who also assisted in the escape by the free use of his hands.

In the darkness that ensued while the struggle was going on old Molly led the mad Mexican woman away to one of the secret chambers.

She also gave a hint to Rory to follow her example by guiding his two young friends in the same direction.

And thus it was that Lord Massey and Blair were confounded at the sudden disappearance of all those engaged against them in the struggle.

The poor Mexican woman was quite delighted to find herself in the company of the young man whom she believed to be her husband, and she did not give the slightest alarm while Lord Massey and his followers were searching the castle.

When the search was over Rory was sent out by the secret passage to spy on Lord Massey and Jack Blair, and it was while the wild rogue was peeping in through the library window that he heard the announcement made by Dick Massey of the arrest of the escaped convict in the town.

Lord Massey and his friends felt confident that the convict would be safe in the hands of the police, but they were also anxious to have him borne back to Spike Island with as much secrecy as possible.

They did not dream that the patriots on the mountain could be interested in the unfortunate man, as they could not know that he was connected with them in any way since his escape.

Dan Redmond was deeply pained on hearing that the poor convict was captured again.

A consultation was held and Captain Conway, Dan and Rory left the castle and rode to the mountains, where Captain Conway succeeded in gathering a force of men and returned to town. They surrounded the tavern where the hunted convict was under arrest and after a severe struggle rescued him and succeeded in making Jack Blair a prisoner. Then Captain Conway dashed for the mountains with his prisoner.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONFESSION OF A SCOUNDREL.

Captain Conway kept only three of his followers with him as they dashed across the mountain with the prisoner.

They had not proceeded very far when a large force of their enemies appeared on the brow of the hill behind them, and the young officer turned to his friend, saying:

"We will have a hot chase now, but I think we can soon laugh at them."

Dan Redmond kept his eye on Jack Blair also, as he felt that the rascal held the key to the whole mystery surrounding his father, and he said to himself:

"That scoundrel could make it all clear if we could only force him to tell the truth."

After moving along over the rugged path for some distance, with their scouts out in front, the pursuers divided themselves into three parties and started out down the other side of the mountain with as much speed as possible.

The strongest party, led on by Lord Massey, pushed down after the horsemen and the prisoner.

After proceeding some distance down the mountain, Captain Conway looked back at the pursuers, and he then turned to Roaring Rory, crying:

"You can guide us to the coast by the shortest route, Rory?"

"To be sure I can, captain," answered the wild young fellow, as he urged on Jack Blair's horse.

As they were rushing on Jack Blair was struck by an overhanging limb and knocked from his horse. They all dismounted and Captain Conway examined the wound, which was on the temple.

The young Irish American officer had quite a knowledge of surgery, and after he had examined the prisoner carefully he declared that he would die before morning.

"I know I will," groaned the unfortunate man, who was becoming more penitent at the approach of death.

He then turned his eyes on the convict as he continued to groan forth:

"If I could only see old Molly Murphy and the Mexican woman very soon, I may tell you a strange story, Denmore Massey."

Dan Redmond, Captain Conway and the convict then consulted together, when it was determined to tend for old Molly and the Mexican woman at all risk.

Roaring Rory was then consulted, and the bold young fellow at once volunteered to hasten to the castle after his grandmother and the mad woman.

As Rory was about to start out with three of his friends Dan Redmond called him aside and said to him:

"It would be a splendid thing, Rory, if you could bring Lord Massey with you also."

"Choke me if I don't try it, as it is more than likely that he will be soon returning to the castle after giving up the hunt."

Roaring Rory then started away in high glee, while the others returned to tend to the dying man.

Jack Blair refused to talk until he saw old Molly and the Mexican woman, and the others could only hope to prolong his life by giving him some brandy.

Rory and his friends returned in triumph at last, bearing old Molly and the Mexican woman with them, together with Lord Massey and Maggie Blair.

Lord Massey had been captured by Rory and his bold friends while returning to the castle alone after giving up the fruitless hunt with the dragoons.

Maggie was all tears and pity for her father when she learned that he had only a few hours to live at most, and all those present pitied her in her grief.

Old Molly was as stern as ever, and she at once addressed the dying man, saying:

"You sent for me Jack Blair and now I want to know what you want with me?"

"Blair," cried Lord Massey, as he cast trembling glances around, "I call on you to remain silent and to die like a brave man."

"And I call on you, Jack Blair, as you hope for mercy hereafter," cried the convict, in pathetic tones, "to tell the truth at once."

"I will tell the truth," groaned the dying man.

"Denmore Massey, I have been your enemy through life, and I have assisted another enemy in crushing you. Do you know why I hated you?"

"I cannot imagine," answered the convict, "as I tried to treat you well when we were going down together, and when you first came to the castle in my father's service."

"Yes, you treated me well enough as a servant, but you

stole the love of the girl that I wished to make my wife. You remember Mary Clarke?"

"I should remember her, as I was accused of her murder, although heaven knows I did not even make love to her."

"Whether you did or not," answered the dying man, "she loved you, and she refused me on that account. With the help of Lord Massey there, I made the world believe that you killed her, when the poor girl actually put an end to her own life."

"Be silent, I command you, Blair," thundered Lord Massey.

"I will not be silent in my dying hour, my lord. I have lived to learn that deception and crime bring their own punishment, and I will speak the truth before I die. You were the man last seen with Mary Clarke on the bank of the river, but we made the world believe that it was Denmore Massey there who was with her, and he was compelled to fly when accused of killing her."

Lord Massey was about to interrupt the dying man again, when Maggie turned on him in a rage, crying:

"Silence, sir, and let my father atone for his crime before he dies."

The dying man then went on, saying:

"When you were driven from Ireland, Denmore Massey, your cousin Richard here sent me to America to keep track of you and to lead you into further trouble if I could."

The dying man paused as if for rest, and he cast a peculiar glance at the Mexican woman, who was remaining very silent, before he continued, saying:

"Then it was that Lord Massey here and myself got up another plot for the destruction of the young man we hated. Before leaving Ireland, Denmore Massey there had become involved with the Irish patriots, and he was accused of a murder besides."

"If we could once get him on board an English man-of-war, his doom was sealed, as he would be then taken back to Ireland and put to death there or imprisoned for life. He did stroll out one night beyond the city, and we had a party of soldiers from the ship to pounce on him and take him on board without creating the least alarm. On the following day Lord Massey there, who could imitate his hand to perfection, wrote a letter to his wife in New York in his name, in which he stated that he had a wife living in Ireland, and that he was compelled to go back to her."

"The letter also stated that Dan Redmond was not his right name, that he was heir to an estate and a title, and that his wife in New York would never see him again, but that he would supply her with means for herself and her son while she lived."

Grasping his father by the hand, while tears appeared in his eyes, Dan Redmond said:

"I know, sir, that your good wife always thought of you as a true and honorable man."

The convict gazed earnestly at the young fellow and then inquired:

"Did you know her, sir, and who are you?"

"I will tell you that hereafter. Let us hear what this man has to say now, as there is another subject I would like to have explained by him," answered Dan Redmond, as he turned to the dying man again.

Jack Blair cast another glance at the mad Mexican woman as he continued, saying:

"I think I know what you allude to, young man. It is in reference to this lady?"

"It is, sir."

The Mexican woman became very much agitated at the moment, and she strode forward and stared at Dan Redmond as she eagerly inquired:

"Are you not Captain Redmond?"

"I was never a captain, I assure you, good lady."

The convict stepped out in front of the mad woman at the moment, saying:

"I was known in Mexico as Captain Redmond of the American army, but I do not remember ever having seen you there, madam."

The woman shook her head, and then turned to Jack Blair, crying:

"You were not the man who was my husband, John Blair, you knew my husband in Mexico, and in pity tell me where he is now."

The dying man raised his head from the sofa on which he was reclining and pointed at Lord Massey as he exclaimed in thrilling tones:

"There stands the man who married you in Mexico, when he had a wife living in Ireland at the time. He told you his name was Captain Redmond, and that he belonged to the American army. You followed him here to Ireland, and then you became mad when you heard that he had another wife here, and that he was sent to prison for life. Lord Massey, do you dare deny what I say?"

"I do deny all you say. Jack Blair, you are an ingrate and a lying scoundrel."

The Mexican woman glared at Lord Massey, and she pressed her hands to her temples as if striving to recall his features and his voice, when she sprang forward suddenly and confronted him, crying:

"You are the man I married in Mexico, and whom I knew as Captain Redmond. Traitor, wretch, where is the little girl I loved so much?"

"There she is," cried the dying man, as he pointed to Maggie. "Oh, Maggie, Maggie, forgive me if I deceived you, but it was all for the best, I thought. You are not my daughter, but you are very dear to me. As I hope for some forgiveness hereafter, I swear that the lady there is your mother and Lord Massey is your father."

The dying man then gasped for breath and expired, and Maggie fell sobbing on his breast, crying:

"May heaven forgive you, sir, as you have been more than a father to me all my life."

CHAPTER XVI.

RETRIBUTION.

The convict then turned to Dan Redmond, crying:

"Oh, sir, if you know anything about my wife and child, tell me if they are living yet?"

"Your dear wife is well, and she is in the next town awaiting you. Father, father, I am your son!"

As the young man spoke he tore away the disguise he had assumed again after the death of Jack Blair.

Maggie then turned and embraced her mother as she sobbed forth:

"I believe you are my mother, as my heart always warmed to you. Are you certain that Lord Massey there is really my father?"

"To be sure he is," cried old Molly, "as I knew the secret from Jack Blair all along. Lord Massey, will you deny your own flesh and blood?"

The prisoner cast a glance around at the stern faces surrounding him, and then stammered forth:

"Yes, Maggie, I must confess that you are my daughter, and have I not treated you nicely always?"

"How ever you have treated me, if you are my father I will defend you. Do you confess that the dead man spoke the truth concerning this unfortunate gentleman here, who is your cousin?"

"He cannot deny it, as far as I'm concerned," cried the

Mexican woman, as she faced the wretch in a furious manner. "Oh, you vile, treacherous wretch, you do deserve a terrible death, but I will forgive you if you will make atonement by confessing your crimes."

"I will make such a statement and sign my name to it if you promise to let me go clear."

Placing some paper and a pen and ink on a small table before him, Captain Conway said:

"Then write the statement."

The prisoner hastened to comply with the request, and he wrote a statement of his crimes at the dictation of his injured cousin.

When the document was signed, Dan Redmond read it aloud and then placed it in his pocket, saying:

"All honest men will believe this, but it is not worth a pin in law. Lord Massey, we will keep you as a prisoner until we are ready to sail for France."

The guilty man cast a glance around him, and he then made a bound from the cabin, crying:

"You infernal hounds, I defy you all!"

He then drew a revolver and shot himself in the head. Death resulted instantly.

On the following evening a yacht sailed out of the bay with Dan Redmond and his father and mother.

Roaring Rory accompanied them, as the wild lad swore that he would never leave Dan Redmond again.

Lord Massey was buried next day.

Old Molly Murphy, Maggie and the Mexican woman returned to the castle with Jack Blair's dead body, and they then announced to young Richard Massey and his sister the sad story of the death of their father.

Steps were soon taken by the escaped convict to reclaim his title and estates, but a compromise was made with young Richard Massey, who agreed to give up half his revenue to the exile on condition that he would not press the claim.

Old Molly continued to live at the castle until her death, and the Mexican woman resided there also in charge of her daughter, Maggie.

When Maggie's mother died four years afterward, the young girl hastened to America, where she was received by Mrs. Redmond, the former convict and young Dan with open arms.

About a year after arriving in America Maggie became Rory Murphy's wife, and she received a private income from young Lord Massey.

In less than a year after that time young Lord Massey and his sister paid a visit to America, when Dan Redmond proposed to his young cousin, who had become a brilliant young lady, and he was accepted.

THE END.

Read "RUNNING THE LINE; OR, THE BOY ENGINEER OF THE ROCKIES," by James C. Merritt, which will be the next number (645) of "Pluck and Luck."

SPECIAL NOTICE. All back numbers of this weekly except the following are in print: 1 to 8, 10 to 25, 27, 29 to 36, 38 to 40, 42, 43, 48 to 51, 53 to 55, 57 to 60, 62, 64, 66 to 69, 71 to 73, 75, 81, 84 to 86, 88, 89, 92 to 94, 99, 100, 102, 105, 107, 109, 110, 116, 119, 124 to 126, 132, 140, 163, 166, 171, 179 to 181, 212, 216, 239, 247, 257, 265, 266, 277. If you cannot obtain the ones you want from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 24 UNION SQUARE, New York, and you will receive the copies you order by return mail.

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BRIEF, BUT POINTED.

Two brave duelists, who were rather poor marksmen, met recently at daybreak, a little beyond the border of a Virginia town, to avenge their wounded honor. One of the principals, although he aimed at his antagonist, struck a tree behind which a surgeon was standing. The bullet of the other combatant wounded a cow in an adjoining field. The owner of the cow appeared and demanded pay for the animal. As the duelists refused, the farmer chased the party from the field at the point of a pitchfork.

Farmers in Decatur county, Ind., who have given over their lands as game preserves are being confronted with a situation that promises to be serious. The Hungarian pheasants that were placed in the game preserves are becoming exceedingly tame, and it is no uncommon thing for them to wander into barnyards. On the Charles Throp farm an unusually large pheasant seems to have a particular aversion to turkeys. It has destroyed two or three turkey nests and whipped the gobbler of the brood to a frazzle. It is a common sight when a pheasant appears in a barnyard to see a fight between it and chickens, and the pheasant usually wins.

The Quartermaster's Department of the army has under consideration a plan proposed by Capt. Casper H. Conrad, Jr., Third United States Cavalry, for the marking of Government horses. Capt. Conrad is one of many officers who have for years been trying to devise some means by which army horses may be permanently marked for identification. The present system consists of painting a number on the hoofs of the animals, but as these marks soon wear off the plan never has been considered good. Capt. Conrad suggests tattooing the inside of the upper lip of the animal, and for this purpose he has invented an instrument to do so. It is believed that this system will in nowise injure the animal while marking the animal in a way that cannot be obliterated. The system proposed will confine the number to four figures. If the Conrad plan is approved by the Quartermaster General it will probably be necessary to get Congress to pass a bill prohibiting any private parties from using the Government system of numbers, and to prohibit interference with the numbers once after tattooed in the animal's mouth. The present hoof markings never last more than four months. It is not probable that the adoption of Capt. Conrad's plan will mean the establishment of a new "tattoo" branch of the army.

The mileage of the blood circulation reveals some astonishing facts. It has been calculated, for instance, that, assuming the heart to beat sixty-nine times a minute at ordinary pressure, the blood flows at the rate of two hundred and seven yards in a minute, or nine miles an hour, two hundred and twenty miles a day, and eighty thousand miles a year. If a man eighty-four years old could have had one single blood corpuscle floating in his blood all his life, it would have traveled in that time nearly seven million miles.

OUR COMIC COLUMN.

"It's a long way from this world to the next," said a dying man to a friend who stood at his bedside. "Oh, never mind, my dear fellow," answered the friend consolingly. "You'll have it down-hill."

"Farewell," was the title of a poem sent to a newspaper; and the cruel editor in acknowledging its receipt, said: "It is a good thing that the gifted authoress bade it good-by, as she will never see it again."

A gentleman giving a lecture to some boys was explaining how no one could live without air. He then said: "You have all heard of a man drowning; how does it happen?" The answer was: "'Cause he can't swim."

"See here," yelled the farmer to the city chap who had just fired into a flock of ducks on the pond down back of the house; "those are not wild ducks; those are domestic ducks, sir." "Can't help it, sir, if they are," answered the city chap, calmly reloading. "They're just as good for my purpose, exactly."

They have kept track of 400 Vassar College girls who have married off in the last fifteen years, and thirty of them are reported to have married worth over \$2,000 each. Nevertheless, it is a great comfort for a man to return from his work and have his little wife meet him at the gate in four languages and a landscape.

A young man who was desirous of marrying a daughter of a well known merchant, after many attempts to broach the subject to the old gentleman, in a very stuttering manner, commenced: "Mr. O——, are you willing to let me have your daughter Jane?" "Of course I am," gruffly replied the old man; "and I wish you could get some other likely fellows to marry the rest of them."

"Do you like 'Hamlet'?" asked the hostess of her unlettered, if gushing, guest. "Indeed I do," was the reply. "I am excessively fond of it, but I always prefer a savory to a sweet one." There was a momentary confusion, and then the hostess realized that the admiration of the guest was of a culinary, not literary, character. "I gave her ham with an omelette for breakfast next morning," said the hostess, when telling the story.

Even the brightest boy in the class can be scared into stupidity by the wrong kind of teacher. "You boy over in the corner!" cried the man behind the desk. The boy over in the corner shot up like a bolt. "Answer this," continued the examiner. "Do we eat the flesh of the whale?" "Y-y-yes, sir," faltered the scholar. "And what," pursued the examiner, "do we do with the bones?" "P-please, sir," responded the boy, "we l-leave them on the s-s-sides of our p-plates."

LITTLE JACK'S DEATH SHOT

By Horace Appleton.

"Courage, Jack, courage, lad! Lay still as death, and perhaps the pirates will not find us!"

"I'm afraid! Oh, Bob, the bloodthirsty wretches will surely put us to death if they do find us, for they have killed all on board save ourselves!"

The merchant vessel, Wellington, in the East Indian trade, lay a helpless, well-nigh dismantled wreck in the Indian Ocean.

It was in the days when buccaneers flourished in those waters, and piracy on the high seas was a thing of frequent occurrence.

The portion of the ocean through which the route of the merchantmen bound for European ports lay was a favorite cruising ground for the dreaded buccaneer, Captain Flint, called "the black pirate," because of his swarthy face and his dark deeds of crime.

He commanded a large schooner, heavily armed and iron-sheeted like a war vessel, and he had become the terror of the Indian merchantmen.

Many a good ship had he captured and plundered, and he was merciless as a savage. He never spared a captive, save now and then a beautiful lady, whom he reserved for a fate worse than death. After his red-handed crew had thoroughly pillaged a captured vessel it was his custom to riddle it with broadside after broadside of heavy cannon shot until it sank.

The two persons whose conversation begin the narrative were Jack Marlan, the son of the captain of the Wellington, and a sailor called Bob Brenton.

Some hours previously, the merchantman, which was laden with a rich cargo from the Indies, was attacked by the black pirate.

And when we record the terrified utterances of Jack Marlan and his companion, they lay concealed in the hold of the Wellington.

Jack spoke naught but the truth, when he declared the pirates had slain all on board save themselves.

And the cruel work of the lawless buccaneers had been accomplished despite the most heroic resistance of the crew of the Wellington.

When the pirates finally boarded the ill-fated vessel, Jack and Bob Brenton, who had been wounded by a stray shot early in the sea-fight, had fled from the deck and concealed themselves in a secret compartment of the hold, in which a large amount of treasure from the Indies was concealed.

The pirates were plundering the ship when Bob Brenton spoke to caution Jack to silence. The lad was only sixteen, and all on board the Wellington loved the bright, active little fellow.

In their hiding-place Jack had looked to Bob's wound, which was in his right arm, and after binding up the member as well as he could he fixed it in a sling. The sailor's arm was useless, and Jack well knew the brave fellow would not have fled from the deck had he been able to do his duty there.

There was a brace of pistols in Bob's belt, and he told Jack to take one, while he drew the other in his right hand, as they presently heard the hoarse voices of the pirates in the hold near them.

All the blood-stained sea robbers were engaged there in a search for the boy, Little Jack, and the wounded sailor, as the hidden ones learned in a moment.

The voice of the pirate chief which they had heard on the deck reached them. They heard the swarthy sea thief shout fiercely:

"I tell ye, lads, I saw a boy and one sailor flee from the deck, and rush down the companionway as I leaped over the rail. The brat and the sailor are hidden somewhere, but we'll rout 'em out, and make them walk the plank!"

Little Jack trembled somewhat as he heard the pirate's murderous threat. But he clutched Bob's pistol more firmly, and his big, bright eyes shone with new brilliancy.

Nearer and nearer to the hiding-place of the only two survivors of the crew of the doomed ship came the pirates as they searched the hold for them.

Little Jack and Bob fairly held their breath.

They heard the wretches sounding on the partition which separated their place of concealment from the main hold.

But it was a double partition, filled with sand on purpose to prevent a hollow sound, and the space was very narrow and right against the ship's side.

The imperiled ones presently heard the pirates move on, and they began to breathe again.

Presently, however, the voice of Captain Flint sounded very near them again, as he cried out:

"Well, lads, this beats me! It must be the boy and the sailor leaped into the sea. They might have done so through the port window we found open!"

"Come. There's no use looking for 'em further. Hurry up, lads, and get the plunder on our schooner. I don't like the looks of the vessel we've sighted to the south. She ain't a regular man-o'-war, but she may be one of those confounded British gunboats that's been cruising after us of late," added the pirate chief.

"Thank heaven! we are not to be found!" whispered Bob.

Little Jack grasped his hand and pressed it, but he said nothing.

After that he and the sailor heard the pirates working away, as they removed the most valuable portion of the cargo to the deck, thence to be transferred to their own vessel.

Half an hour elapsed. Then they heard Captain Flint shout the order:

"All hands on deck! We've got to leave this vessel! The coming craft is a gunboat, sure enough, and we have barely time to sink this ship and get off. But the night is at hand, and we'll elude the gunboat in the darkness."

The words "we have barely time to sink this ship," seemed to Little Jack and Bob like a knell of doom.

They believed there was no escape—that they were doomed to go to the bottom with the ill-fated merchantman.

"Better drown in the ship, lad, than show ourselves to the pirates and be put to death by them," whispered Bob, grimly.

Little Jack fell on his knees.

No words passed his lips, but he was praying—praying fervently, and with simple, childish faith, as his good mother had taught him to do at her knee, far away in his happy home in old England.

Bob looked at him and muttered:

"If there is mercy in heaven, the prayers of that little boy will be heard."

The moving feet of the pirates on the deck overhead sounded presently, and then, after a short time, all was silence on the doomed ship.

"The pirates have gone," said Bob.

After that he and Little Jack waited in terror and suspense to hear the report of the broadsides from the pirate schooner, with which they knew the wretches would seek to riddle and sink the merchantman.

Suddenly the detonation of the heavy guns on the pirate

came crashing upon their hearing, and they heard the shot strike and shatter and splinter the vessel.

One great cannon ball went through the side of the vessel over their heads, and they were covered with the falling splinters, but neither were hurt.

Then followed an interval of frightful suspense for the sailor and his boy comrade. One, two, five minutes elapsed, but another broadside did not come.

Suddenly the dull boom of a cannon echoed from a distance over the sea.

Bob was crouching upon the floor, but he leaped to his feet. "That was not one of the pirate's big guns, I'm sure!" he cried.

Rushing out into the hold, he made his way, followed by Little Jack, to the cabin of the captain and looked through the window.

Jack was close at his side and both saw the pirate making off before the wind, while a formidable-looking gunboat flying the English flag was in pursuit of her.

Pushing up the companionway, they gained the deck, and in a moment or so, aided by Jack, the seaman ran up the signal of distress at the head of the one mast that was yet standing.

The gunboat immediately changed her course and steamed up to the merchantman. Bob and Jack were seen from the deck of the former. A boat was lowered and it pulled off to the dismantled ship.

Jack and Bob were taken into the boat, and very soon they were safe on the deck of the English gunboat.

The course of that craft was then again changed, and she steamed swiftly away after the black pirate.

And Jack told the captain of the gunboat his story. The captain was a bluff but brave seaman, and he said:

"We'll catch the rascal yet if the night does not prove too dark. She has a good start and the wind is in her favor. But we have steam power, and we'll surely overhaul her if we can keep her in sight."

The shadows of the night fell swiftly. But on and on, like a Nemesis, on the trail of the ocean destroyers held the gunboat.

Gradually the gunboat crept upon her.

Meanwhile, it was now the pirate's turn to feel anxious.

Captain Flint finally called his officers around him on the quarter-deck.

"Men," said he, "we have got to come to a fight, after all. The night will not darken, as I hoped. There's only one chance for us. We must try the ruse that succeeded so well, when we were chased by the French cruiser a month ago."

"What! Do you mean to secretly board the gunboat, under cover of the smoke of battle, as you did the French cruiser, and fix a train to the magazine and blow her up, as you did the Frenchman, while you make your own escape?" demanded the first mate.

"Yes. If my time has come, I've got to die, anyhow, and any fate is better than the gallows," replied the pirate, like a fatalist.

The gunboat came on steadily.

Soon she was within range, and then she opened fire on the pirate schooner. The latter had been cleared for action.

And the pirate's guns, in a broadside, answered the fire of the gunboat.

The latter drew nearer, and the roar of the great guns on both vessels soon became almost incessant.

The battle smoke hung thick in the night air, and the clouds drifted over the face of the moon.

Under the smoke, the surface of the sea was in dark shadows.

Silently Captain Flint put off, in a small boat, from the side of the schooner away from the gunboat.

In his little boat the pirate carried a fuse and a cannister of powder.

Under cover of the smoke he rowed noiselessly for the gunboat.

The crew of the gunboat had no idea that a terrible danger was swiftly and silently approaching them.

It was customary to employ boys in those days on war vessels to serve the gunners with powder.

There were several boys on board the gunboat to attend to this duty.

But Little Jack begged the captain to let him help the "powder monkeys" as the lads were called.

"And so you shall! You are a little hero!" cried the captain of the gunboat.

So Jack threw off his hat and coat, and removed his shoes, to gain the greatest freedom of movement and, barefooted and hatless, he began to bring up cannisters of powder from the magazine as they were needed by the gunner, to whose assistance he was assigned.

Jack had made his third trip to the magazine in the hold, and he was there alone getting out some powder, when all at once, he heard a sound behind him.

He was in the deep shadows, and as he turned upon hearing the noise, he saw a man in the act of climbing through an open port window from the sea.

At one glance Jack recognized him as Captain Flint, the terrible black pirate. The sea-wolf reached the floor under the window and Jack watched him breathlessly, not daring to stir.

He saw that the wretch carried a fuse and a cannister of powder.

Instantly the lad suspected the terrible purpose the pirate had in mind.

Jack was at the door of the magazine. At that terrible moment the mind of the brave boy worked like lightning.

He knew that death was very near him, for he could not retreat, since the pirate was between him and the companionway. He knew that Captain Flint would murder him, if possible, as soon as he saw him.

Scarcely a step had the wretch advanced when his gleaming eyes fell upon Jack.

Dropping his fuse and powder cannister, he drew a murderous-looking dagger, and he was in the very act of leaping at Little Jack, when the report of a pistol rang out.

Uttering a frightful yell the pirate spun round and fell heavily on his back.

Jack still had Bob's pistol in his belt when Captain Flint saw him. Like a flash the boy had drawn the weapon and fired.

As the pirate fell, Jack cast aside his weapon and with a cannister of powder in each hand he bounded over the fallen wretch and dashed for the companionway.

Jack gained the deck in a moment and breathlessly told the captain all.

The latter and Jack with several of the crew went down into the hold. There they found Captain Flint, as he had fallen—stone dead.

And his boat was found fastened under the port window.

The sea fight did not last long after that. The guns of the English craft completely riddled the pirate's schooner, and she surrendered. The pirates, who survived the battle, were captured and afterwards tried and hanged.

In due time Jack safely reached his home in England, and in after years he became a distinguished officer in the British navy.

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